











# INDIAN TEA ASSOCIATION



## REPORT

OF THE

## GENERAL COMMITTEE

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st DECEMBER, 1957.



Calcutta:

1958.—[2]



**REPORT**  
**INDIAN TEA ASSOCIATION**  
**1957**





# INDIAN TEA ASSOCIATION

Report for the year ended 31st December, 1957.

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# INDIAN TEA ASSOCIATION

## REPORT OF THE GENERAL COMMITTEE FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER, 1957.

The General Committee have pleasure in presenting to members their report on the work of the Association during their period of office.

**Membership.**— The following tea estates ceased to be members during the year : —

Chandmari and Burrapahar Tea Estates  
 Craigpark Tea Estate.  
 Dilli Tea Estate  
 East Hopetown Tea Estate.  
 Ramchandi Tea Estate.

**General Committee, Chairman and Vice-Chairman.**— At the Annual General Meeting of members of the Association held on the 8th March, 1957 the following firms were declared elected by the votes of members to constitute the General Committee for the year 1957 and the representatives of these firms, who comprised the Committee during the year were as stated :—

<i>Firms</i>	<i>Representatives</i>
Messrs. Balmer Lawrie & Co., Ltd.	Mr. C. D. Wilson
„ Duncan Brothers & Co., Ltd.	„ L. T. Carmichael
„ Gillanders Arbuthnot & Co., Ltd.	{ „ D. L. Betts „ G. A. Whitaker
„ James Finlay & Co., Ltd.	{ „ N. S. Coldwell, M.C. „ A. N. Sircar
„ James Warren & Co., Ltd.	{ „ R. L. Hards Sir Richard Duckworth, Bt.
„ Jardine Henderson Ltd.	{ Mr. J. P. H. Bent „ I. F. Morriss, O.B.E.



<i>Firms</i>	<i>Representatives</i>
Messrs. Kilburn & Co. Private Ltd.	{ Mr. J. Saddler, M.B.E. .. R. J. L. Oakley
„ Macneill & Barry Ltd.	{ .. H. Mackay Tallack .. E. A. Pitcairn
„ Octavius Steel & Co., Ltd.	.. G. Kydd
„ Shaw Wallace & Co., Ltd.	.. H. K. Stringfellow
„ Williamson Magor & Co., Ltd.	{ .. P. H. Williamson, M.C. .. P. B. Nicholls
„ Andrew Yule & Co., Ltd.	.. G. F. Oldham

At the first meeting of the General Committee held on the 13th March 1957 Mr. C. D. Wilson of Messrs. Balmer Lawrie & Co., Ltd. was elected Chairman of the Association and Mr. D. L. Betts of Messrs. Gillanders Arbuthnot & Co., Ltd. was elected Vice-Chairman. When Mr. Betts proceeded on leave the General Committee at its meeting held on the 1st August 1957 elected Mr. H. K. Stringfellow of Messrs. Shaw Wallace & Co., Ltd. as Vice-Chairman in his place. In November Mr. Stringfellow resigned and Mr. D. L. Betts who had returned from leave was re-elected Vice-Chairman of the Association. In January 1958 Mr. Betts resigned and at a meeting held on the 7th January, 1958 Mr. L. T. Carmichael of Messrs. Duncan Brothers & Co., Ltd. was elected Vice-Chairman in his place.

**Sub-Committees.**— The following Sub-Committees were constituted during the year 1957 :—

*Darjeeling & Dooars Sub-Committee.*

Mr. G. Kydd, <i>Chairman</i>	Mr. G. F. Oldham
{ .. J. P. H. Bent .. I. F. Morriss, O.B.E.	{ .. N. S. Coldwell, M.C. .. A. N. Sircar
„ G. C. Carlton	.. H. K. Stringfellow

Mr. L. T. Carmichael	Mr. G. A. Whitaker
{ .. P. Fraser-Casey	{ .. P. H. Williamson, M.C.
.. B. P. Bajoria	.. P. B. Nicholls

*Scientific Department Sub-Committee*

{ Mr. N. S. Coldwell, M.C.,	{ Mr. R. L. Hards
Chairman	.. A. K. J. Henderson
{ .. A. N. Sircar	.. G. Kydd
.. P. B. Nicholls,	.. G. F. Oldham
Vice-Chairman	{ .. J. Saddler, M.B.E.
.. E. H. Adams	.. R. J. L. Oakley
{ .. D. L. Betts	.. H. K. Stringfellow
.. G. A. Whitaker	.. C. D. Wilson

*Labour Sub-Committee*

Mr. C. D. Wilson,	{ Mr. R. L. Hards
Chairman	.. A. K. J. Henderson
{ .. D. L. Betts	{ .. J. Saddler, M.B.E.
.. G. A. Whitaker	.. R. J. L. Oakley
{ .. N. S. Coldwell, M.C.	Hon'ble S. P. Sinha
.. A. N. Sircar	

*Tea Control and Cost of Production Investigation Sub-Committee*

Mr. C. D. Wilson,	Mr. L. T. Carmichael
Chairman	{ .. N. S. Coldwell, M.C.
{ .. D. L. Betts	.. A. N. Sircar
.. G. A. Whitaker	Sir Richard Duckworth, Bt.

*Foodstuffs (Assam and Cachar) Sub-Committee*

{ Mr. P. H. Williamson,	Sir Richard Duckworth, Bt.
M.C., Chairman	Mr. H. K. FitzGerald
{ .. P. B. Nicholls	
{ .. N. S. Coldwell	.. H. K. Stringfellow
.. A. N. Sircar	

During the absence on leave of Mr. P. H. Williamson from July to October, Sir Richard Duckworth acted as Chairman of the Sub-Committee.

*Tea Warehousing and Shipping Sub-Committee*

Mr. C. D. Wilson,	Sir Richard Duckworth, Bt.
Chairman	
„ F. Carman	{ Mr. E. A. Pitcairn Hon'ble S. P. Sinha

*Finance and Taxation Sub-Committee*

Mr. J. S. F. Gibb, C.A.,	{ Mr. A. H. Forster, C.A.
Chairman	{ „ R. M. Bonner, C. A.
„ S. B. Dutt, C.A.	{ „ B. Ghose, A.S.A.A.
	{ „ F. D. Collins, A.C.A.
„ D. Fordwood, C.A.	„ N. C. Lance, C.A.

*Supplies, Transport and Freight Rates Sub-Committee*

Mr. H. K. Stringfellow,	{ Mr. E. A. Pitcairn
Chairman	{ Hon'ble S. P. Sinha
„ A. E. Barker	{ Mr. C. S. Shaw
Sir Richard Duckworth, Bt.	{ „ S. K. Mullick
{ Mr. W. G. Everard	„ Balam Singh
{ „ G. C. Carlton	

*Customs and Excise Sub-Committee*

Sir Richard Duckworth, Bt.,	Mr. N. P. Goenka
Chairman	
Mr. A. E. Barker	{ „ E. A. Pitcairn
	{ Hon'ble S. P. Sinha

*Bonus Sub-Committee*

Mr. C. D. Wilson,	{ Mr. N. S. Coldwell, M. C.
Chairman	{ „ A. N. Sircar
{ „ D. L. Betts	{ „ J. Saddler, M.B.E.
{ „ G. A. Whitaker	{ „ R. J. L. Oakley

*Plantation Enquiry Commission Sub-Committee*

Mr. C. D. Wilson,	{	Mr. R. L. Hards
Chairman	{	Sir Richard Duckworth, Bt.
{	{	{
.. N. S. Coldwell, M.C.	{	.. J. Saddler, M.B.E.
.. A. N. Sircar	{	.. R. J. L. Oakley

*Decimal Coinage Sub-Committee*

Mr. C. D. Wilson,	{	Mr. J. Saddler, M.B.E.
Chairman	{	.. R. J. L. Oakley
{	{	{
.. D. L. Betts	{	.. H. K. Stringfellow
.. G. A. Whitaker	{	

**Headquarters Staff.**— Throughout the year Mr. J. L. Llewellyn continued to serve as Deputy Chairman of the Association. When Mr. Llewellyn was on leave from July to November his duties were undertaken by the Calcutta Adviser, Mr. P. Crombie, who also took the place of the Shillong Adviser for several months when the latter was absent from Shillong. In April the Additional Adviser, Mr. H. J. Walsh, found it necessary to resign from the Association's service, and his place was taken by Mr. J. E. Atkins, whose appointment had the advantage that he had served for many years with the Tea Districts Labour Association and was thus already well acquainted with the industry.

The Association's secretarial work continued to be performed by the Bengal Chamber of Commerce and Industry, from whose staff Mr. W. M. Paris (absent on leave for part of the year), Mr. I. H. Nish and Mr. J. W. D. Kelley were deputed to attend to the Association's affairs.

**Secretarial Staff of the Branch and District Associations.**—No changes were made in the secretarial arrangements of the Branch Associations during the year under review. Mr. J. R. Wilson continued as Deputy Chairman and Secretary of the Assam Branch with Mr. P. N. McWilliam as Joint Secretary, Labour.

Mr. S. B. Dutta continued as Secretary of the Surma Valley Branch while the Dooars and Darjeeling Branches remained

under Brig. F. H. Stevens and Lt. Col. E. S. E. Rerrie respectively.

**Labour Department.**— The Labour Department staff of the Association remained unchanged during the year. A small change in nomenclature, however, was made and all the officers of the Department are now designated Labour Advisers or Additional Labour Advisers.

In the Assam Branch Mr. G. T. Allen, Mr. P. J. Parr and Mr. R. J. Barkley were on leave during the year while Mr. P. N. McWilliam acted as Shillong Adviser from July to October during the absence of Mr. J. S. Hardman.

In the Dooars Branch Mr. R. C. Mazumdar was on leave from May to September 1957. The office of the Additional Labour Adviser, West was moved from Nya Sylee to Binnaguri in October 1957.

The Labour Department staff are at present posted as follows:—

Mr. P. N. McWilliam	Dikom	} Assam Valley
Mr. K. N. Sircar	H. Q.	
Mr. R. J. Barkley	Zone 1	
Mr. D. K. Dutta		
Mr. J. R. Gee Smyth	Zone 2	
Mr. H. T. Rooke		
Mr. G. T. Allen	Zone 3	
Mr. P. J. Parr		
Mr. S. B. Dutta		Cachar
Mr. D. B. H. Moore	Binnaguri	} Dooars
Mr. R. C. Mazumdar	Hasimara	
Mr. T. Borooah	Binnaguri	
Lt. Col. E. S. E. Rerrie		Darjeeling

**Statistical Department.**— The Association's Statistical Department continued to function in 1957 under the direction of Mr. B. A. Yashanoff, B.B.A. The Department has been of great assistance in collecting and analysing statistics relating to

the monthly crop estimates, acreage and population figures, housing reports etc. and in particular in providing details of profits and losses of Tea Companies required in connection with the calculation of Bonus.

**The Tea Board.**— (a) *The Board.*—The Tea Board was re-constituted by the Government of India as from the 1st April 1957 and the Association was represented on the new Board by the following gentlemen:—

Mr. C. D. Wilson  
Mr. L. T. Carmichael  
Mr. H. K. Stringfellow  
Mr. L. F. Paget, and  
Mr. R. M. Vipan

(b) *The Executive Committee.*—The Tea Board has an Executive Committee of nine and the following gentlemen represented the Association on it during the year:—

Mr. C. D. Wilson  
Mr. L. T. Carmichael

(c) *Licensing Committee.*—Rule 12 of the Tea Rules 1954 provides for the constitution of two Licensing Committees one for North India and one for South India. The Association's representatives on the North India Committee were Mr. C. D. Wilson and Mr. L. T. Carmichael.

(d) *Tea Research Liaison Committee.*—One of the functions of the Tea Board is to undertake, assist or encourage scientific, technological and economic research and the task of making recommendations for this purpose is allotted to the Board's Tea Research Liaison Committee on which the Association is represented by the following gentlemen:—

Mr. C. D. Wilson  
Mr. R. M. Vipan, and  
The Director, Tocklai Experimental Station.

(e) *Ad Hoc Committee on Tea Chests*.—The Association was represented on the Board's *Ad Hoc* Committee on Tea Chests, whose principal function is to rationalise the placing of orders on approved factories and to safeguard the interests of consumers by—

Mr. H. K. Stringfellow

Mr. D. L. Betts, and

Mr. J. L. Llewellyn

(f) *Ad Hoc Building Committee*.—The Association is represented on the Tea Board's *Ad Hoc* Building Committee by Mr. H. K. Stringfellow of Messrs. Shaw Wallace & Co., Ltd.

(g) *Propaganda Committee*.—Rule 12 of the Tea Rules 1954 provides for the constitution of two Propaganda Sub-Committees one for North India and one for South India. Mr. H. K. Stringfellow represented the Association on the North India Propaganda Sub-Committee during the year.

**Minimum Wages : Advisory Boards and Advisory Committees.**

(a) *Central Advisory Board*.—The Association was represented on the Minimum Wages Central Advisory Board by the Deputy Chairman, Mr. J. L. Llewellyn.

(b) *West Bengal Advisory Board*.—The Association was represented on the West Bengal Minimum Wages Advisory Board by Mr. P. Crombie, the Calcutta Adviser.

(c) *Advisory Committee for the Dooars, Terai and Cooch Behar*.—The following gentlemen represented the Association on the West Bengal Minimum Wages Advisory Committee for plantations in the Dooars, Terai and Cooch Behar:—

Mr. L. T. Carmichael

Mr. J. P. Shaw

Mr. K. R. Standing, and

Mr. P. Crombie

(d) *Advisory Committee for Darjeeling.*—The following gentlemen represented the Association on the Minimum Wages Advisory Committee for Hill Gardens in Darjeeling:—

Mr. J. L. Llewellyn  
Mr. C. W. Emmett, and  
Sir Richard Duckworth, Bt.

**Indian Standards Institution.**—The Association continued its membership of the Indian Standards Institution during 1957 and was represented on the following Committees of the Institution by the gentlemen indicated:—

- (a) *Wood Products Sectional Committee* by Mr. F. Carman and Mr. P. Nicholls both of Messrs. Williamson Magor & Co., Ltd., as principal and alternate representatives respectively.
- (b) *Fertilizer and Allied Products Sub-Committee.* } by Mr.  
(c) *Acids & Fertilizers Sectional Committee.* }  
S. M. Smith and Mr. J. L. Capper both of Messrs. Shaw Wallace & Co., Ltd., as principal and alternate representatives respectively.
- (d) *Agricultural & Food Products Division Council* by Mr. H. Ferguson, Director, Tocklai Experimental Station and Mr. P. De Jong, Chief Scientific Officer of the United Planters Association of Southern India as principal and alternate representatives respectively. Mr. C. D. Wilson also served as the alternate member to the Chairman of the Tea Board on this Council.

The Tea Board drew the attention of the Association to the recommendations made at a Conference of State representatives, Union Ministries etc. held in July 1957, regarding the adoption of Indian Standards Specifications and the recognition of I.S.I. Certification marks and these recommendations were brought to the attention of members in Circular No. 125 of the 19th November 1957.

**Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel National Memorial Fund.**—Mr. D. L. Betts of Messrs. Gillanders Arbuthnot & Co., Ltd., represented



the Association on the West Bengal Pradesh Committee of the Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel National Memorial Fund during the year under review.

**Representation of the Association on various Bodies.**—The Association was represented on various public bodies during 1957 as follows:—

- (a) The Governing Body of the Endowment Fund of the School of Tropical Medicine by Mr. H. Mackay Tallack.
- (b) The Committee of Control of the Ross Institute of Tropical Hygiene, India Branch by Mr. H. Mackay Tallack.
- (c) The Eastern Regional Committee of the Central British Committee by Mr. P. H. Williamson.
- (d) The Railway Rates Advisory Committee by Mr. J. Saddler, M.B.E.
- (e) The West Bengal Leprosy Association by Mr. K. Balram Singh.

**Honours Awarded to Members of the Tea Industry.**—The Committee have pleasure in recording the grant of the O.B.E. to Mr. J. R. Wilson, Deputy Chairman of the Assam Branch Indian Tea Association in January, 1958.

**Indian Tea Association (London).**—As in the past the General Committee corresponded throughout the year with the Indian Tea Association (London) on all matters of common interest and liaison between the two Associations was greatly facilitated by an interchange of visits which made possible discussion of many of the problems which confronted the Industry in 1957.

Sir Percival Griffiths, C.I.E., Adviser to the London Association visited India in October and took the opportunity of touring the Tea Districts of Assam. Mr. A. N. Stuart, C.B.E., Chairman of the London Advisory Committee and Mr. E. J. Nicholls, Chairman of the London Development Panel visited

Toeklai Experimental Station during their visits to India and advantage was taken of their presence to discuss various matters relating to the work of the Scientific Department.

In London Mr. D. L. Betts, Mr. N. S. Coldwell, Mr. H. Mackay Tallack, Mr. J. Saddler, Mr. H. K. Stringfellow, Mr. P. H. Williamson, Mr. J. L. Llewellyn, the Deputy Chairman and Mr. J. S. Hardman, the Shillong Adviser were invited to attend meetings of the Indian Tea Association (London) when they were in England in 1957.

In addition, in accordance with custom, the Chairman and Deputy Chairman paid a visit to London in July 1957 when discussions on a wide range of subjects took place.

**United Planters Association of Southern India.**— As in the past liaison has been maintained between the Association and the United Planters Association of Southern India by an exchange of views on matters of importance to the Tea Industry. The South Indian Association was represented at the meeting of the Consultative Committee of Producer Associations held on the 1st May 1957 in Calcutta while in August, when the Association's Chairman visited South India in connection with meetings of the Tea Board, the opportunity was taken of holding a meeting of the Committee in Coonoor. Prior to the meeting of the Industrial Committee on Plantations held in January 1958 the representatives of both Associations were able to hold preliminary meetings at Shillong on the Agenda with a view to presenting a united approach on the matters which were later discussed at the Tripartite meeting.

**The Branch and District Associations.**— The various Branch and District Planters Associations with whom the Committee correspond on all matters of interest to Producers are as follows:—

	<i>Membership Acreage.</i>
Assam Branch Indian Tea Association	... 2,53,574
United Planters Association of Southern India	... 1,47,002
Dooars Branch Indian Tea Association	... 1,02,075

	<i>Membership Acreage.</i>
Indian Tea Planters Association, Jalpaiguri ...	61,940
Surma Valley Branch Indian Tea Association ...	61,685
Bharatiya Cha Parishad ...	56,867
Assam Tea Planters Association ...	42,007
Darjeeling Branch Indian Tea Association ...	40,389
Surma Valley Indian Tea Planters Association ...	17,380
Terai Planters Association ...	11,673
Tripura Tea Association ...	10,847
Kangra Valley Tea Planters Association ...	9,500
Terai Indian Tea Planters Association ...	6,850
Dehra Dun Tea Planters Association ...	4,858
Indian Tea Growers Association, Silchar ...	2,614

**Consultative Committee of Producer Associations.**—The Consultative Committee of Producer Associations which was established in 1956 continued to function and three meetings were held in 1957 on the 1st May, the 26th June, and the 21st August. An outstanding feature of these meetings was the fact that the August meeting was held in South India at the offices of the United Planters Association of Southern India. A variety of subjects were dealt with at these meetings, including the export quota system, the International Tea Agreement, Crop Regulation, Taxation, Labour Bonus, Decimal Coinage, Export Duty, Metric System of Weights and Measures, Workers Participation in Management, Violence and Indiscipline on plantations.

**Terai Planters Association.**— As members in the Terai do not have the benefit of the services of a Labour Officer the Association has since 1950 made a grant, subject to annual review, of Rs. 4,000/- a year to the Terai Planters Association.

This grant was also paid for 1957.

**Tea Control: International Tea Agreement.**— No progress was made during the year under review in connection with the

renewal of the International Tea Agreement. The Association and other producers continued to urge upon Government the vital necessity of such an Agreement, but unfortunately international circumstances and market conditions were not conducive to accord among the various producing countries.

**Tea Control in India.** (a) *Tea Act.*—Control over the planting of tea in India and over its export from this country is exercised by the Government of India through the medium of the Tea Act 1953.

(b) *The Licensing Committee.*—The provisions of the Tea Act in so far as they relate to tea control are enforced by the Tea Board acting through the medium of two Licensing Committees, one for North India and the other for South India. The Association's representatives on the North India Committee are Mr. C. D. Wilson of Messrs. Balmer Lawrie & Co., Ltd. and Mr. L. T. Carmichael of Messrs. Duncan Brothers & Co., Ltd.

(c) *Export Quota Allotment.*—In April the Government of India authorised an interim release of export quota for the 1957/58 season equivalent to 50% of the crop basis of estates and in October a second interim release equivalent to 5% of the crop basis of estates. On the estimated crop basis of 726.56 million pounds the total release of quota amounted to 399.61 million pounds. In January 1958 some members reported a shortage of quota to cover their exports and the Association asked the Tea Board to request the Government of India to declare the final allotment for 1957/58 as soon as possible so that producers' quota accounts could be credited and delays to exports could be avoided.

In February, 1958 the Government of India fixed the export quota allotment for the year 1957/58 at 460.96 million pounds which is equivalent to approximately 63.44% of the crop basis of estates.

The following comparison between the releases made in 1957-58 and in the previous two years indicate how dilatory the Government of India were in this matter and it is feared

that a fair amount of quota will remain unused at the end of the financial year :—

	1955-56	1956-57	1957-58
March	50%	—	—
April	—	40%	50%
September	10%	—	—
October	—	10%	5%
December	—	12%	—
January	9%	—	—
February	—	1.1%	8.44%
	69.00%	62.10%	63.44%

(d) *Export of dust tea without quota.*—To facilitate the export of dust teas to certain Middle East countries the Government of India issued a notification on the 5th October 1957 relaxing the provisions of Sections 19, 20 and 21 of the Tea Act in respect of export licences for dust teas applied for before the 31st December 1957. By virtue of this relaxation it became possible to export dust teas from India under licences, which were valid up to the 31st March, 1958 but which were not required to be covered by export quota rights. By a notification dated the 27th December 1957 the Government of India extended the date, by which applications for licences for the export of dust teas had to be made, up to the 31st March, 1958.

The Association was not consulted on this measure, but its representatives on the Tea Board pointed out that the most likely result would be that dusts of types suitable for these markets would at once increase in price by the current value of quota, so that their competitive status vis-a-vis other countries' dusts would not be improved. This turned out to be the case, but the measure did have a strengthening effect on the current dust market as a whole.

It was also stressed that the quantity of dusts so exported must either come off the balance teas available for internal consumption or, if it affected the export quota allotted for

general export, would reduce the quantity of non-dust teas that could be exported. Both courses had their disadvantages, but it was the Association's view that the former was preferable under present circumstances, and, as evidenced by the final quota release, it was accepted by Government.

(e) *Export of Tea Seed from India*.—As is customary, the Tea Board asked all Producer Associations in April 1957 to submit details of the amount of tea seed likely to be produced by their members during the year and also the amount likely to be required by them for replacements and new plantings. The returns submitted by tea estates indicated that their requirements of tea seed would exceed their production and in September the Tea Board advised that the Government of India had decided that no tea seed should be allowed to be exported from India during the financial year 1957/58.

(f) *Extensions and Replacements*.—In last year's report it was mentioned that all applications for extensions received from tea estates of over 500 acres would have to be referred by the Tea Board to the Government of India for sanction. During the year the Tea Board laid down that such applications would also have to be supported by a declaration that the estate had sufficient land for carrying out the extensions applied for.

The Tea Board also decided that all permits for extensions and replacements issued prior to the 1st April, 1955 would lapse on the 31st March, 1958 and that all permits issued for extensions and replacements in the 1955-60 period would remain valid up to the 31st March, 1960. These conditions were subject to the overall power of the Tea Board to cancel any permit or part of a permit which had not been utilised after a period of not less than three years from the date of its issue.

**The Tea Act 1953.**—(a) *The Act*.—No amendments to the Act were made during the year under review.

(b) *The Rules under the Act*.—During the year under review a few minor amendments to the Rules were made by the Government of India and copies of the notifications issued are reproduced in the Appendix to this report.

**The Marketing of the 1957 Crop.** (a) *Crop* : On the basis of the monthly crop returns submitted by Agency Houses the 1957 tea crop in North East India has been estimated by the Association's Statistical Department at 521,365,843 lbs. as compared with the revised estimate of 540,054,236 lbs. for 1956, which indicates a fall in production of approximately 3.46%.

(b) *Export quota allotment* : --In April the Government of India authorised an interim release of export quota for the 1957/58 season equivalent to 50 % of the crop basis of estates. On an estimated crop basis of 726.56 million pounds this release was equivalent to approximately 363.28 million pounds.

In October the Government of India authorised a further release of 5% of the crop basis of estates making the total release approximately 399.61 million pounds.

In February, 1958 the Government of India declared the final export quota allotment for 1957/58 at 460.96 million pounds which is equivalent to approximately 63.44% of the crop basis of estates.

(c) *Calcutta.*—The disposal of the 1956 crop was completed earlier than in the previous year, largely because of the agreement to cease plucking on 20th November, 1956 and because of the heavy shipments which had taken place at the time of the Suez crisis. As in the previous year, two special sales of early Darjeeling teas were held in May, and the first sale of new season teas from all districts took place on 10th June.

When the season opened, demand was rather better than it had been at the commencement of the 1956 season, partly because of the earlier disposal of the 1956 crop and partly because the outturn of new crop was substantially below average. By the end of July however the market had weakened and demand was much more selective. As in the past, quality teas then came into their own, and a strong and active demand was maintained for Darjeeling and for the more useful C.T.C.s. Common teas, on the other hand, were depressed, and for much of the season many gardens in Cachar and the Dooars

were obliged to sell below the cost of production. It was not until the end of the year that any general price improvement took place and although this was largely due to the overall reduction in the North Indian Crop, it was also partially caused by purely fortuitous external factors—political trouble in Indonesia and floods and dock trouble in Ceylon.

(d) *Internal Catalogue*.—Sales of leaf teas in the internal market, which amounted to 38,063 chests up to the end of December, showed a substantial increase in comparison with the 24,359 chests which had been sold by the end of 1956. Throughout the year demand for these teas was fairly firm but, unfortunately from the producers' point of view, prices were not sufficiently remunerative.

(e) *Dust Grades*.—The sale of dusts also showed a very definite increase over 1956, 379,611 chests having been disposed of by the end of the year compared with 369,015 the previous year. Throughout the year the better dust grades sold well, but prices for the poorer descriptions were low. As from October, when the export of dusts without quota rights was permitted, an improved demand was initiated but this was not fully maintained.

(f) *Quality*.—Because of climatic factors, 1957 did not achieve the vintage standards of the previous year, but on the other hand there was clear and definite evidence of endeavours to improve quality by finer plucking and more careful manufacture. These improved standards were evident in all districts, and in particular they resulted in the production of above-average rains teas in Darjeeling and Assam. In other areas the greater care exercised in plucking and manufacture was reflected in a generally high standard of leaf appearance.

**Tea (Distribution and Export) Control Order, 1957.**—In last year's report it was recorded that the Tea Board had prepared a revised set of rules to cover its proposed scheme for the licensing of packers, distributors and exporters of tea but that these rules had not been made public at the time. In a notification dated the 15th July, 1957, however, the Government of



India published a draft Order to provide for the licensing of distributors, packers and exporters on which they invited comments. While this draft was an improvement over that which the Association had considered in 1956 there were various objectionable features which mainly concerned Traders and Packers and it was left to the Calcutta Tea Traders Association to bring these points to the attention of Government. The Association contented itself with asking for the following points to be clarified:—

- (1) that a person who distributed tea manufactured by himself would not be deemed to be a distributor;
- (2) that licences would not be required to be taken out by persons who exported their own teas under private contract;
- (3) that teas would only be considered as adulterated if there had been an addition of foreign matter and not, as was proposed, if they did not conform to the stated quality.

The final Order called "The Tea (Distribution and Export) Control Order, 1957" was issued by the Government of India in a notification dated the 25th November and copies were circulated to members in Circular No. 132 dated the 7th December, which is reproduced in the Appendices to this report. The Order has not yet been brought into force.

**Shipment of Unsold Teas to the London Auctions.**— In a Press note dated the 15th October, 1957 the Government of India announced that after reviewing all factors, external and internal, they had decided to restrict the shipment of unsold teas to auctions overseas during the year 1957/58 to 155 million lbs. for North East Indian Estates as against 160 million lbs. in the previous season. As in previous years the restriction was operated voluntarily through the Calcutta Tea Regulation Committee, 5 million lbs. being reserved for shipments by proprietary concerns and the remainder being distributed to Agency Houses in proportion to their direct exports to the London auctions during the three years 1951 to 1954

plus half of their direct sales to the United Kingdom and out markets during the same period. To ensure the full utilisation of the quota allotted by Government, Agency Houses were asked to keep their quotas under constant review and to release any excess quotas for the use of other Agency Houses which might be in a position to ship more.

**Export Promotion Committee.**— In last year's report it was recorded that the Export Advisory Council had decided to set up an Export Promotion Committee and that Mr. C. D. Wilson and Mr. H. Mackay Tallack had been nominated for appointment to the Committee as representatives of the Tea Industry.

The Export Promotion Committee was constituted by the Government of India in February, 1957 under the Chairmanship of Mr. V. L. D'Souza and consisted of eight members besides the Chairman. The resolution appointing the Committee provided for the co-option of additional members as and when required. The Association's nominees, however, were not called upon to serve on the Committee, which issued a comprehensive questionnaire in March to all Chambers of Commerce and trading bodies.

As the Calcutta Tea Traders Association had submitted a very satisfactory reply to this questionnaire in so far as export policy was concerned the Association decided to confine its reply to the difficulties experienced by Tea Producers arising from—

- (1) The Industry's geographical position.
- (2) Taxation.
- (3) Labour.

A copy of the Association's reply is reproduced in the Appendix to this report.

The Export Promotion Committee issued its report on the 31st August 1957 and its recommendations relating to the Tea Industry are also reproduced in the Appendices to this report. The most outstanding of the recommendations

made were that common teas should be given some relief in the matter of export duty and that there should be no ceiling on the export of unsold teas to the London Auctions.

**Export of Tea : Certification of Samples.**— In June the Tea Board asked the Traders Associations for their views on a scheme under which the shipper would send samples of his teas to his overseas buyer as well as to the Tea Board. When the buyer accepted the offer he would ask the Tea Board to examine on his behalf the actual tea being despatched. The Tea Board would draw samples from the consignments at the shipment sheds and would have the samples compared with the samples on which the offer had been based by a specially constituted panel of tasters. If the samples agreed the Tea Board would suitably mark the consignment to show that it conformed to the original sample with the Board.

After considering the views expressed by the Traders Associations, the Tea Board convened a joint conference on the 11th October, 1957 of all Producer and Traders Associations to consider the scheme, when it was approved by all in principle on an assurance being given by the Chairman of the Tea Board that it would be entirely voluntary and that even when an exporter expressed his intention to use the scheme for a particular consignment this would not necessarily bind him to use it for subsequent shipments. It was made clear that it was for the exporter to take advantage of the scheme or not as he chose on each occasion.

The details of the scheme have not been finally decided as yet.

**Quality of Indian Tea.**— During the year the Association continued to impress upon members the desirability of maintaining the highest possible standards of production and manufacture. In 1956 buyers had generally recognised the improvements in standards which had been effected and members were asked to give instructions to managers to adopt even finer plucking and to continue to pay the most careful attention to the process of manufacture and to the destruction of all forms of

waste. Members were also asked to take all possible steps to ensure that their teas did not contain any extraneous matter, the presence of which had given rise to complaints from overseas buyers. It is satisfactory to report that these recommendations were generally accepted by members and that the quality of the 1957 crop was very satisfactorily reported on by all concerned.

**Plantation Enquiry Commission.**— The report of the Plantation Enquiry Commission, although it was published in August, 1956, did not become generally available until the end of that year, and as a result the Association's comments on the report were not submitted to Government until January, 1957. Last year's report contained a full summary of the principal recommendations made by the Commission, and also of the Association's views on the report and its main criticisms.

The task of examining the Commission's recommendations and advising on the action which Government should take on them was entrusted to Mr. U. K. Ghoshal, the Chairman of the Tea Board, but although the subject was debated in general terms at a meeting of the Tea Board during the latter part of 1956, no definite action was taken by Government during the first half of 1957. At length on 1st July, 1957 the Government of India published a resolution announcing the action they had decided on. A large number of the Commission's recommendations were accepted : a fairly large number were rejected ; and there remained a few which, Government stated, were still under examination. The text of Government's resolution on the subject is reproduced in the appendices to this report ; and, on the whole, it can be said that Government have adopted a moderate and practicable approach to the subject and that they do not contemplate any revolutionary changes in the Industry's structure or methods of operation.

**Pay Scales for Sirdars, Chowkidars etc. in Cachar.**— In the Association's report for 1955 details were given of the negotiations which had been taking place with the I.N.T.U.C. regarding the fixation of revised pay scales for sirdars, chowkidars etc. in the Assam Valley and Cachar. In 1956 agreement was reached in respect of the Assam Valley and the pay scales agreed upon

were recorded in the report for that year. In the case of Cachar, negotiations were only completed in June, 1957 when it was decided that the following scales should be brought into force with effect from the 1st January, 1957 :—

Sirdars (in charge of 40 workers)—Rs. 40-1-50-2-70.

Officer, factory, line and bungalow chowkidars—  
—Rs. 35- $\frac{1}{2}$ -45.

Dressers (excluding pharmacists)—Rs. 40-1-50-EB-2-70.

Dearness allowance—30% of the basic salary in all cases.

It was also agreed that all existing incumbents would receive one immediate increment of Re. 1/-, one increment of Re. 1/- for every five years of service up to ten years and one increment of Rs. 2/- for every additional five years of service.

**Scales of Pay for Nurses and Midwives.**—(a) *Assam.*—At the Annual General meeting of the British Medical Association held on the 18th February, 1955 a suggestion had been made that the Indian Tea Association should revise the description of nurses given in its 'scales of pay for clerical and medical staff' circular of 1954. The Assam Branch of the Association therefore considered various proposals not only for revising the nomenclature of the staff concerned but also for revising their scales of pay and with the Association's approval they made the following recommendations in this connection :—

State Registered Nurse with Nursing  
Certificate only (3 years training) ... Rs. 80-5-180

State Registered Midwife (18 months  
training) ... .. Rs. 80-2-120

State Registered Dhais ... .. Rs. 80-0- 80

Nurses, midwives and dhais without the requisite qualifications should be designated 'nursing attendants and continued on their present scales of pay.

(b) *Cachar.*—The Surma Valley Branch did not consider it necessary to have as many grades of nurses as recommended by

the Assam Branch and they proposed that the scales of pay for new entrants on tea estates in Cachar should be as follows:—

Auxiliary Nurse-cum-Midwife  
(2 years' training in  
Nursing and Midwifery) } 80-2-120

Servant Allowance : 35-12  
D.A. : Ruling Scale.

Midwives (locally trained) : 60-1-70 L.B.-2-90

Servant Allowance : 20  
D.A. : Ruling Scale.

**Assam Minimum Wages : Rice Cut Compensation.**— It was stated in last year's report that towards the end of 1956 the Supreme Court passed judgment on the appeal which the Association had filed in this case but that, though the appeal had been lost, the implications of the judgment were far from clear and were still being studied. The case, of course, related to the demand by labour for the continued payment of the allowance known as rice cut compensation which had been abolished by the Association's members as from 30th March, 1952, when the Assam Government's Notification fixing minimum rates of wages took effect.

The net effect of the Supreme Court judgment and the Industry's consequent liabilities proved exceedingly difficult to determine, and it was only after consultation with Counsel that the Association was at last able to decide on the action required. The ultimate conclusion was that, at the most, the Industry's liability could extend only from 30th March, 1952 to the date of conversion which, in the majority of cases, was 1st April, 1954. In the course of time, the wide variety of problems involved were solved and payment was made without too much friction. It is to be hoped that the subject is now closed.

**Payment of Bonus to Labour.**— Under the terms of the Delhi Agreement on bonus which was entered into in January 1956, labour bonus for the year 1955 was required to be paid by the end of February 1957, and was to be related to the

1953/54 bonus in proportion to the prosperity of the various bonus areas during 1955 as compared with their prosperity in 1953/54. The Delhi Agreement laid it down that the calculation of area prosperity should be based on the working results of ten sample companies in each area the companies to be chosen by lot.

It did not appear to the Association that the selection of companies by lot was a sound procedure, for it meant that the sample would be purely haphazard and unscientific, and it might well result in freak results by reason of the selection of companies whose results differed widely from the average. As early as November 1956 therefore, the Association suggested an alternative scheme whereby the average prosperity of each area during the years from 1951 to 1954 would be calculated and there would then be a selection of the ten companies in each area whose working results were closest to the average trend. These ten companies would then be used as a basis for calculating bonus entitlement in respect of 1955. Although this scheme was placed before the labour representatives in November, 1956, there were unfortunately long delays in securing its final acceptance and, even after prolonged correspondence and after the Association had supplied much additional financial data, delay continued because of the preoccupation of the labour representatives with election work during the early part of 1957. Eventually, towards the end of May, the Regional Labour Commissioner (Central) convened a meeting of the four North-East Indian representatives on the Six-Man Committee which had drafted the original bonus agreement, and at that meeting it was possible to secure acceptance of the Association's formula for the calculation of area prosperity. The terms of the agreement which was entered into at this meeting are reproduced in an Appendix to this report; and the amounts of labour bonus payable in each of the areas under the terms of the agreement for the year 1955 were as follows :—

*West Bengal*

Darjeeling	...	...	...	9/-
Terai	...	...	...	14/-
Dooars	...	...	...	23/-

*Assam*

Zone I	...	...	...	67/-
Zone II	...	...	...	57/-
Zone III	...	...	...	49/-
Cachar	...	...	...	4/-

The considerable reduction in the amounts of the foregoing bonus payments as compared with those for 1953/54 was a natural reflection of the deterioration in the Industry's financial position as compared with the unusual prosperity of 1954. Not unexpectedly, the reductions provided the occasion for strong agitation by many labour unions, particularly in West Bengal, but the Association was able to show conclusively that, apart from the improved method of selecting companies for the calculation of area prosperity, the bonus was strictly in accordance with the terms of the Delhi Agreement. On the whole, with the exception of the Darjeeling area, the actual payment of the bonus, which was to be concluded by the end of June, took place with remarkably little incident. In Darjeeling however, there was strong opposition to the acceptance of the bonus and on many gardens workers refused to take the money when it was offered to them. Fortunately, the agitation was relatively shortlived and, in the course of time, the bonus came to be generally accepted and payment was successfully concluded.

It was the intention that the bonus for 1956 should be computed and paid during the cold weather of 1957/58, and with this object the Association obtained the 1956 financial results of the ten companies in each area which had been selected for the calculation of 1955 area prosperity. Again, however, unexpected delays occurred in the conclusion of negotiations with the labour representatives and, while it is hoped that the 1956 bonus will shortly be settled at a meeting to be convened by the Regional Labour Commissioner, a final settlement has not actually been reached at the time of writing. It is to be noted that 1956 is the last year for which bonus will be payable under the terms of the Delhi Agreement.

**Clerical Staff Bonus.**— During 1957 payment of clerical staff bonus for the year 1955 was made in the Assam Valley and in



West Bengal in accordance with the terms of the agreements entered into respectively in 1955 and 1956. In the case of those staffs who had chosen to be governed by the Association's formulae in preference to individual company schemes, there was naturally an appreciable reduction in the quantum of bonus as compared with that paid for the year 1954 and, in individual cases where the company's profit for 1955 was particularly small, the clerical staff were at a disadvantage by reason of the fact that labour had first call on available profits for bonus purposes. In consequence, there were a number of petty disputes as to how exactly profits should be calculated—a point which was not of particular importance provided that, for the purposes of the Association's formulae, the same method of calculating profits was followed each year—and in addition there were individual attempts to resile from the arrangement that, once a company's staff had exercised their option to be governed by either the Association's formulae or a company scheme, they were bound to adhere to that choice throughout the period of the agreement. On the whole however these disputes, where they did arise, were of comparatively minor importance and the payment of the clerical staff bonus for 1955 passed off without major incident.

In Cachar, although there have been spasmodic negotiations on the subject of bonus over the past few years, no standard bonus agreement exists and where clerical staff are in receipt of bonus it is under the terms of a purely individual company scheme. The absence of a standard agreement however led to renewed agitation during 1957, with the result that the Government of Assam referred the subject to an omnibus Industrial Tribunal for adjudication. Since the reference to the Tribunal, no further development has taken place.

**Provident Fund.**— During 1957 the following developments occurred in connection with provident fund matters.

(i) *West Bengal.*—As described in last year's report, the Employees' Provident Fund Scheme—a scheme operated under the auspices of the Central Government and applied to and covering a wide range of industries throughout India—was applied to tea garden factories as from August 1956 and, at the

end of 1956, a Bill was placed before Parliament which would enable the Act and Scheme to be applied to organisations other than factories. In due course this Bill passed into law and in February 1957 Government announced that the Provident Fund Scheme would be extended to plantations—other than those in Assam, which has its own provident fund arrangements—with effect from the 1st May 1957. The Association immediately took the occasion of asking the Regional Provident Fund Commissioner to ensure that all notices and administrative instructions in connection with the extension of the scheme were issued promptly, and at the same time assured him of its desire to co-operate and willingness to enter into discussions on any problems that might arise in the application of the scheme to ordinary tea garden labour.

It was anticipated that the extension of the scheme to the general labour force would be simplified by virtue of the fact that garden managements already had experience of its working with regard to their factory labour; but at the same time it was clear that the scheme would involve an enormous burden of additional administrative work. To consider the problems that were likely to arise in this regard, the Association accordingly appointed a special Sub-Committee under the Chairmanship of the Chairman of the Dooars & Darjeeling Sub-Committee, and during April several meetings of this Sub-Committee were held. One of these meetings was attended by the Chief Provident Fund Inspector and he was able to clarify a number of points in connection with the scheme and particularly to give guidance on the elements of wages and allowances on which provident fund contributions would be payable. The clarifications thus obtained were intimated to members in West Bengal by circular. Another aspect of the Sub-Committee's work was a study of the various forms and accounts which had to be maintained under the terms of the scheme, and they came to the conclusion that there was ample scope for a simplification and amalgamation of forms which would greatly reduce the work of both garden managements and the provident fund authorities. Accordingly, detailed proposals for a simplified accounting and administrative procedure were drafted by the Sub-Committee and were duly transmitted to the Central Provi-

dent Fund Commissioner in New Delhi. Unfortunately, apart from some very minor concessions with regard to the completion of forms, the Central Commissioner was unable to accept the Association's proposals, principally because the Provident Fund Scheme already applied to many other industries throughout India and could therefore not be altered at this late date without producing a widespread dislocation of provident fund arrangements.

The actual extension of the scheme to ordinary garden labour was not unnaturally accompanied by various administrative difficulties. Initially, there was a serious shortage of the numerous forms which managements had to maintain for the purposes of the scheme, and indeed several months elapsed before adequate supplies of forms were made available to the Industry. In the Dooars and Terai the deduction of provident fund contributions was almost everywhere peacefully accepted by the labour force, but in Darjeeling there was strong opposition and many managements at first found it impossible to make the deductions without provoking serious labour trouble. On urgent representations being made to the Regional Commissioner about the seriousness of the Darjeeling situation, he kindly agreed that, until labour had been convinced of the desirability of subscribing to the scheme, deductions should not be made in respect of those who were opposed to it, although the employer's contribution still had to be paid. During the next month or two a series of visits to the tea garden areas were made by the Provident Fund Inspectors and, coupled as this was with work by the West Bengal publicity officers, it was eventually possible to persuade the Darjeeling labour force to accept the scheme.

A point which required detailed discussion with the Provident Fund Authorities was the determination of the cash value which should be placed on food concessions for the purpose of provident fund contributions. In view of the controversial nature of the subject, the Regional Commissioner at first agreed that deductions on account of these concessions might be delayed till a later date. Subsequently, in consultation with the Indian Tea Planters Association, it was agreed that the

daily value of food concessions to daily workers in the Dooars and Terai should be fixed at -/1/9, and members in these areas were advised to make deductions in respect of this notional assessment as from 1st September. In Darjeeling it was agreed in November that the cash value of food concessions should be fixed at -/1/- per day.

At the time of writing it would appear that the teething troubles inseparable from the extension of the scheme to garden labour have now largely been resolved and that the scheme is working as satisfactorily as can be expected.

(ii) *Assam*.—The functioning of the Assam Tea Plantations Provident Fund Scheme continued smoothly throughout the year and indeed compared most favourably in many respects with the administration of the Central Provident Fund Scheme. Only matters of comparatively minor administrative concern arose during the year, and of these possibly the most important was the definition of rules regarding the grant of loans from provident fund accumulations. On this subject the Association's attitude was that there should be no provision for loans whatsoever, for not only would they defeat the fundamental object of saving which the scheme was intended to promote, but they would involve an excessive amount of additional administrative work and in any case were hardly necessary by virtue of the fact that on many estates arrangements already existed for the grant of loans by the managements. These views were urged upon the Board of Trustees at a meeting held early in January, but unfortunately they were not acceptable to labour and the Board proceeded to frame draft rules. The rules, when they were published in April, were not unreasonable however, for they provided that loans could be granted only for the purpose of marriages within the family, death ceremonies and the payment of premia on insurance policies, and there were further safeguards in that loans were limited to 25% of a worker's accumulations or three months' pay, whichever was less, and that no loans would be permitted if there were alternative arrangements for the grant of financial assistance by the estate management concerned. The Association's comments on the draft rules were therefore confined to minor points of drafting.

One development regarding the scheme which caused a certain amount of concern was a demand from the Provident Fund Office in April that the calculation of interest—fixed at  $1\frac{1}{2}\%$  the previous January—on the accumulations of individual employees should be carried out by garden managements. It was strongly objected that this additional work was the proper function of the provident fund authorities themselves and should not be forced upon the already over-burdened managements. On its being represented however that the task was much less onerous than had originally been supposed and that the Provident Fund Office was simply not in a position to undertake the work at present, the Association was obliged to acquiesce, for the present occasion only, in managements undertaking the work of calculating interest. Discussions later in the year were concerned with how these calculations could be undertaken by the Provident Fund Authorities, possibly on the payment of additional administrative charges—an increase in costs which seems inevitable in any case since it is understood that pressure is being brought to bear to have the administrative charge increased to the 3% which is charged under the Central Government's Provident Fund Scheme.

On the introduction of the decimal system of coinage on 1st April, the Provident Fund Office announced that for the time being managements could continue to use either the old currency system or the new decimal coinage in their accounting practices but that after April the totals in gardens' weekly returns would have to be shown in the new currency as banks and treasuries would insist on entries being made in that manner. The Provident Fund Office would itself commence the maintenance of accounts according to the decimal system after October.

**Assam Factories Rules: Head Tea House Babus.**—In the Association's report for 1955 it was mentioned that attempts were being made to get Head Tea House Babus included in the category of supervisory staff so as to secure exemption from the provisions of overtime in respect of them. No progress was made in this connection in 1956 but in a notification dated the 14th August, 1957 the Government of Assam appointed a

Committee, on which the Association was represented by the Shillong Adviser, to go into the question of overtime for Head Tea House Babus. The Committee held its first meeting on the 28th November when it agreed to define its terms of reference as follows :—

“Determination of the criteria to be adopted for deciding whether a Head Tea House Babu is holding a position of Supervisor”

No decisions were taken at this meeting but it was agreed that an investigation should be made in July, 1958 into the actual number of hours which were worked by Head Tea House Babus.

**Artisans in Assam.**— In the Association's report for 1955 it was recorded that the Government of Assam had set up regional Committees to carry out the tests which had been approved for determining which tea garden employees should be treated as Artisans.

In November, 1957 the Assam High Court in a case involving the Dewan Tea Estate gave a judgement declaring both the approved tests and the regional Committees to be “illegal.” According to the judgement it is the prescribed authority, viz. the Deputy Commissioner, who has to decide whether or not a person is an artisan and therefore eligible to receive the minimum wage fixed for this category of workers and the regional Committees have no jurisdiction in the matter.

The judgment is naturally one with profound implications and the Government of Assam is considering its attitude towards it. The Association in the meantime has agreed that all those who have been given artisan status as a result of tests carried out by the Regional Committees will not suffer any reduction in status. The difficulty arises in the case of those who failed the tests as it might be possible for them to resubmit their claims for artisan status.

**Lay-off and Retrenchment in Cachar.**— It was recorded in last year's report that the dispute on this subject—as to whether

Cachar gardens had been justified in laying-off and retrenching workers during 1952, and whether any compensation was payable in consequence—had been referred to an Industrial Tribunal by the Government of Assam, and that the Association was anxious that the proceedings should not be held on an omnibus basis but that each garden should be given an opportunity of stating its case on its individual merits. In response to representations on this aspect of the subject, the Government of Assam suggested that gardens whose cases were generally similar might be dealt with in groups and later in the year a suitable compromise was reached by the publication of a notification which modified the reference to the Tribunal by grouping gardens according to their company ownership.

It was agreed after consultation with the Surma Valley Branch that the Association's members should be represented by a single lawyer, the costs to be shared on an acreage basis, and that the statements filed by individual companies would consist of a uniform introductory section which would be prepared by the Branch and would describe the general economic situation of the Industry in Cachar, followed by details of the particular circumstances relating to the company concerned. The first of the companies were called on to file their written statements with the Tribunal in August but, on a joint petition by the Branch and the Union, the Tribunal granted an extension of time until 21st September. Unfortunately, because of circumstances beyond the Association's control, this initial postponement was followed by repeated adjournments and in December when it seemed likely that the first of the statements would at last be filed, it transpired that in the meantime the Union had submitted representations to Government for an amendment of the notification referring the dispute to the Tribunal, the desired amendment being that the Tribunal should be required to judge of the liability for compensation irrespective of whether the retrenchment and lay-off were justified or not. The Union's representations were successful and on the 25th December the Government of Assam published a notification suitably amending the terms of reference of the Tribunal. It is now expected that the first cases will come up for hearing towards the end of February, 1958.

**Conditions of Service of Tea Garden Employees : Discharge of the working members of a dismissed worker's family.** - In the Association's report for 1954 it was recorded that Tribunals had supported the Association's stand that the families of dismissed labourers could be discharged when

- (a) recruitment was by families as in Darjeeling
- (b) management had reasonable apprehension that the presence of the dismissed employee would be prejudicial to peace, order and discipline.

Since that time, however, other Tribunals had given varying rulings on this subject and labour unions in the Tea Districts had been exerting pressure on Government to forbid the practice of employers discharging the families of dismissed workers. Government in their turn referred the case to the Association, who made it clear that tea garden managements could not modify their position in the matter and could only agree to a compromise on the following lines :—

- (1) that the dismissed worker must leave the estate ;
- (2) that if he does so, his family members can continue to live on the estate, if they are workers ;
- (3) that if the dismissed worker refuses to leave the estate or to be separated from his wife, then the family as a whole must leave the estate ;
- (4) that if the family leaves the estate, and settles in the locality, those working members who were not dismissed will remain on the garden's books as "bustee" rather than as "resident" workers ;
- (5) that if the family leaves the estate, but cannot settle in the locality, or does not want to, then the members who were working will receive the statutory retrenchment compensation.

As Government continued to hold that the Association's attitude was contrary to accepted principles of fairness and equity they referred the matter to the Industrial Committee on



Plantations which will discuss the subject at its meeting on the 21st January 1958.

**Holidays with Pay.**— In a notification dated the 2nd April 1957 the Government of India declared the 15th and 16th August 1957 as public holidays throughout India to mark the completion of ten years of Independence and in commemoration of the centennial anniversary of India's first struggle for freedom. On the 17th June Government issued a Press Note recommending that employers should declare both these days as paid holidays and not treat them as substitute holidays.

The 15th August is observed as a paid holiday on member tea estates and the Association had only to decide what action it should take in respect of the 16th August. In consultation with the Branches and other industrial interests concerned it was recommended to members that the 16th August should also be treated as a paid holiday. As these holidays were followed by a weekend it was suggested that members might ask their labour to work on Sunday to make good the loss in production, overtime rates of course, being paid for such work.

**Labour Participation in Management.**— An innovation which gave employers much cause for anxious thought during 1957 was the development of proposals by the Government of India whereby representatives of labour would be associated in the management of industrial enterprises. The first tentative steps in this direction had been taken in 1956 when the Government of India sent a Study Group overseas for the purpose of enquiring into the measure of labour participation in management which had already been adopted in other countries. On its return, this Study Group submitted a report of which the main burden was that India's initial approach to the subject should be on a very modest scale and that there should be no element of compulsion.

The subject was raised again at a meeting of the Indian Labour Conference held in July 1957 at which approval was given to the recommendations made by the 1956 Study Group. The Conference appointed a Sub-Committee to go into the subject further and to suggest methods of implementation, and

this Sub-Committee, at meetings in August, agreed upon the industries which might be asked to set up joint councils of management, on the way in which councils would function, and on the scope of their anticipated deliberations. It was agreed that joint councils, which were to be essentially voluntary, could only be set up in undertakings which satisfied five essential criteria: they must have well-established, strong trade unions, the employers and workers must be prepared to co-operate willingly in the experiment, the undertaking must employ at least 500 workers, the employer must belong to one of the leading employers' organisations and the trade union to a central federation, and the undertaking must have had a fair record of industrial relations. The Sub-Committee also adopted a draft model agreement for the establishment of joint councils—a copy of which is reproduced in the appendix to this report—and it will be seen from it that the functions of the councils fall under three main heads: consultation, information and routine administration. As regards the composition of the councils, it was agreed that the workers' representatives on the councils should be selected from panels of names put forward by the trade unions, but the employers were insistent that the representatives should be actual workers in the industries concerned and not outsiders.

As far as the Tea Industry was concerned, the employers' representatives at the Indian Labour Conference had urged that plantation labour was quite unsuited to participation in management but, in the face of the general support which the proposals were receiving and the fact that similar objections could be raised on behalf of various other industries, this opposition proved unsuccessful. The result was that, in the list of 48 joint management councils which was recommended by the Sub-Committee, the Tea Industry was allotted four—one for South India and three for North-East India. The reference to these proposals to the Committee of the Association was naturally a source of much anxious thought. On the one hand, it was considered not only that work on plantations was unsuited to the participation of labour in management but that plantation labour was far too backward to be able to undertake such a function successfully. On the other hand, the joint

management councils were intended as part of a progressive and forward-looking labour policy, which would inculcate in labour a sense of their own responsibility, an interest in their work and a desire to promote the productive process; the proposals had been accepted by many other industries and were being strongly supported by Government, which meant that, as a progressive employer of labour, the Tea Industry could not unilaterally withhold its co-operation; and, above all, the councils were purely voluntary and experimental, and their functions were severely limited by the draft model agreement.

In the circumstances the Committee of the Association considered that the wisest course would be to give their full co-operation and to agree to the appointment of joint management councils on two estates in Assam and one in the Dooars. The selection of the estates would of course depend—apart from the satisfaction of the criteria prescribed by the Indian Labour Conference—upon the voluntary agreement of the companies and managements concerned, and the Committee considered that a first suitable step might be to ask the labour unions to suggest panels of estates from which, subject to the concurrence of the Association and of the managements concerned, suitable estates for the experiment might be selected. The principal trade union representatives in Assam and West Bengal were accordingly invited to suggest a panel of about a dozen estates each and, at the time of writing, replies have been received from the majority and are now the subject of further study.

**I.L.O. Committee on Work on Plantations.**—It was recorded in last year's report that the I.L.O. Committee on Work on Plantations had recommended the adoption of a convention and a recommendation comprehending and codifying all previous instruments relating to work on plantations, and that the Association had criticised this decision on the grounds, firstly, that it was impossible to separate regulations applicable only to plantations from the general body of regulations and agreements governing industrial labour and that any attempt at such separation would give a distorted picture of the rules governing plantation labour and, secondly, that the I.L.O. Committee's consideration of the subject did less than justice to India by ignoring

many of the benefits and advantages already enjoyed by Indian plantation labour. In February 1957 the report of the Committee on Plantations, embodying the suggested convention and recommendation, was submitted by the Government of India for the Association's comments. After careful study criticism was made of a number of important aspects in which the draft instruments appeared to be in conflict with current Indian practice : they sought to impose unpractical limits on the periods for which contracted labour from distant sources could be recruited, they required that wages should be paid only in money and thus might interfere with, for example, the investment of bonus payments in national savings, they sought to extend periods of maternity leave beyond current Indian practice, and they required that leave should be granted at the convenience of the worker regardless of the needs of production and estate management.

The next development occurred when, member gardens having submitted their comments on the Committee's report, the subject was taken up at the 40th Session of the International Labour Conference at Geneva in June. At that Conference Indian plantation interests were represented by Mr. M. M. Varghese of South India, and before Mr. Varghese's departure the Association briefed him fully on the views which it had already expressed with regard to the draft convention and recommendation. At the time of writing, a further report has been issued on the proceedings of the 40th Session of the International Labour Conference, and the subject has been included in the agenda for the 8th Session of the Industrial Committee on Plantations which is to be held in Shillong towards the end of January.

**The Plantation Labour Act.**-- The following developments took place during the year in connection with the implementation of the Plantation Labour Act :

- (1) *Assam Plantation Labour Rules.* -- In last year's report it was stated that the Association's Shillong Adviser had made suggestions for a simplification and consolidation of the various annual returns required to be submitted under the Assam Plantation Labour

Rules, and that these suggestions were likely to be acceptable to Government. At the end of January, 1957, various amendments to the rules were gazetted for comment by the Assam Government and these, besides incorporating the revised annual return which the Association had proposed, included a number of minor alterations also in line with earlier suggestions made by the Association. Briefly, the proposed changes were that small and inaccessible gardens were absolved from the need for maintaining dispensaries equipped with beds, provided they made suitable and satisfactory arrangements with outside hospitals and doctors; that all garden hospitals were required to maintain isolation wards; that more stringent provisions were proposed for the eviction of workers and the levy of rent when they continued in unauthorised occupation of garden quarters; that the provisions regarding maternity benefits were relaxed to bring them more closely into line with actual garden practice; and that sickness certificates were to be granted by outside doctors only when the Certifying Surgeon or the Government Medical Officer was not available. All of these proposed changes were acceptable to the Association, and, after consultation with the Branches, no comments were submitted.

*Appointment of Certifying Surgeons.*—It was recorded in last year's report that considerable difficulty arose in West Bengal because the West Bengal Plantation Labour Rules prescribed such high qualifications for certifying surgeons that few doctors were able to undertake the duties except Principal Medical Officers, and the latter unfortunately could not undertake the very large amount of work involved in the issue of certificates of fitness. The Association therefore represented to the Government of West Bengal that the qualifications should be sufficiently relaxed to permit of the appointment of Assistant Medical Officers as certifying surgeons. The State

Government's first reaction was unfortunately not very helpful, for they suggested that certifying surgeons should possess the M.B.B.S. qualification and, on enquiry, it was found that very few Assistant Medical Officers held this degree. On further consideration, the State Government agreed to accept any certificate issued under the Indian Medical Degrees Act, the Indian Medical Councils Act, or any State laws relating to medical councils, and it is understood that this relaxed qualification is possessed by the majority of A.M.Os. A suitable amendment to the rules has been gazetted in draft form and its final publication is now awaited.

In Assam action has not as yet been taken to appoint Certifying Surgeons, but it is understood that the State Government are considering the matter and that they will probably be prepared to agree to the appointment of Assistant Medical Officers as Certifying Surgeons.

- (3) *Medical Advisory Boards*.—In Assam a Medical Advisory Board—whose function it is to advise on the implementation of the medical provisions in the Plantation Labour Act—was constituted at the beginning of 1956, and the Association was represented on it by the Chairman of its Assam Branch, accompanied by two advisers. In December 1957 a gazette notification announced that the Advisory Board was being reconstituted so as to give employers and employees five representatives each in place of the present four.

In January, 1957 the Government of West Bengal announced the constitution of a Medical Advisory Board and invited the Association to nominate a representative. In reply the Association nominated the Chairman of its Darjeeling and Dooars Sub-Committee and Government agreed that at meetings of the Board he might be accompanied—at the Association's expense—by two technical

advisers. The first meeting of this Board was held in October and was largely taken up by representations from labour regarding the need for improved treatment of leprosy and tuberculosis. The Association agreed to make enquiries regarding the present incidence and treatment of these diseases and information is now being collected from the Branches

- (4) *Canteens*.—In last year's report it was stated that, since there was uncertainty as to the extent to which tea garden labour would be likely to make use of canteens, the Government of Assam agreed that as an experimental measure canteens should in the first instance be set up in only one garden in each circle of the Assam Valley, with two in Cachar. These canteens would at first be operated experimentally and voluntarily and, after consultations with the other producer associations, it was agreed that members of the Indian Tea Association should construct a total of 12 out of the 16 canteens required in the Assam Valley. There were already two suitable canteens in existence and the remaining ten were distributed among Agency Houses so as to allocate the canteen in each circle to the Agency House with the largest acreage or, where that agency house had already fulfilled its quota, to that with the next largest acreage. All of the agency houses concerned signified their consent to these proposals, the construction of the canteens has since been taken in hand and the experiment is now proceeding.

- (5) *Housing*.—Perhaps the most onerous burden laid upon the Tea Industry by the Plantations Labour Act is the obligation to construct houses each year sufficient to accommodate 8% of the labour force—an obligation which during 1957 gave rise to very great trouble and anxiety. Early in the year garden managements in Assam were required to submit details of their housing programmes to the Chief Inspector of Plantations and, when the Assam

Advisory Board on Housing met in August, it was announced that 490 schemes had been proposed providing for the construction of 10,135 pucca and 440 kutcha houses. Unfortunately, in the implementation of these programmes managements were faced with the most serious difficulties both financial and in the matter of obtaining supplies of scarce materials. In the latter regard the most serious shortage was that of cement and the Tea Board, after announcing that cement would be allocated only on the understanding that it would not be used for the construction of houses, asked the Central Government to advise the States that their house-building programmes should be spread over a longer period, a request which however was not accepted. At the meeting of the Assam Housing Advisory Board held in August it was agreed that the State Government would approach the Centre for a special allocation of cement for house construction and that local materials should be used when shortages rendered this necessary; but at the same time the Labour Minister emphasised that managements should endeavour to construct to optimum specifications in anticipation that in future years standards would be likely to be raised rather than lowered. There is of course a scheme for the grant of loans to estate managements for the construction of houses, but the Association has represented most strongly to the Housing Board that in practice the scheme is ineffective because the conditions on which loans are granted are so onerous as to be incapable of fulfilment by those estates which most require help. In anticipation that many estates would have to seek exemption from the requirements of the Plantation Labour Act because of financial and other difficulties, the Housing Advisory Board in August appointed a Special Sub-Committee to consider applications for exemption and to submit recommendations to the Labour Department.



In West Bengal a Housing Advisory Board was constituted in January, 1957 and the Association nominated as its representatives the Chairman of the Darjeeling and Dooars Sub-Committee and Mr. J. L. Llewellyn, with the proviso that they might be accompanied by technical advisers when meetings were held. In the event, the personnel of the Board were not gazetted until September and the first meeting of the Board only took place on 2nd December. At that meeting the labour representatives were insistent that the Government of West Bengal should adopt the same housing specifications as Assam, while the Association's representatives maintained that these specifications were far too costly. It was therefore arranged that the Government would make a study of housing specifications and costs and in the meantime houses built to the Association's specifications in West Bengal would be approved for the purposes of the Act.

**Industrial Housing Scheme.**-- In the Association's annual report for 1955 it was recorded that the Government of India had prepared a scheme under which loans would be given to tea companies for the construction of houses on the following conditions :--

- (i) The loans would not exceed 80% of the actual cost of construction of the house (excluding the cost of land and its development) subject to a maximum of Rs. 2,000/- for each house.
- (ii) The rate of interest on the loans would vary from year to year but would be in the region of  $4\frac{1}{2}\%$  per annum.
- (iii) The loan would be repayable in 30 equal annual instalments.
- (iv) The houses would have to be allotted to resident labour as required by the Plantations Labour Act on a rent free basis and in accordance with allotment rules to be framed.
- (v) The houses would have to conform to specifications to be laid down and would have to contain at least two rooms and a kitchen.

The finalised scheme was referred to the Association in June, 1956 but it was found that the loans which were offered to plantations would only be available to small estates. This restriction on the grant of loans, it was considered, would greatly reduce the utility of the scheme and the Association took the matter up with the State Governments, who under the scheme would be responsible for the disbursement of the loans, urging them to request the Government of India to modify the scheme so as to allow all estates irrespective of size to apply for loans on the basis of their financial needs. Later the Association addressed the Government of India pointing out that the financial condition of even large estates might be such as to make it necessary, for them to obtain loans if they were to carry out building programmes in accordance with their statutory obligations. The Association then went on to suggest that the magnitude of the housing programme of the tea industry would justify the introduction of a loan-cum-subsidy scheme under which tea companies might receive interest free loans up to 30% of the cost of construction and a subsidy equivalent to 20% of the cost of construction. As a result of these representations the Government of India agreed that the grant of loans need not be restricted to smaller estates only and that they should be available to all needy plantations save that, where the money available for distribution was not enough to meet all the demands, smaller estates should have preference.

The implementation of the scheme, as stated, was left to the State Governments, who have since been trying to frame rules for the disbursement of the loans. In Assam the rules framed have been the subject of negotiations between the Assam Government and the Tea Industry for some time. Government are only prepared to give loans against security and are only prepared to accept immovable property, in the same district as that in which the houses are being built, as security. They are not prepared to accept the houses themselves as security and demand that the Government mortgage on any property offered as security should have preference over all others. Unless these conditions are substantially modified it is unlikely that tea gardens will be able to take advantage of the Plantations Labour

Housing Scheme to which the Government of India have allocated a sum of Rs. 2 crores.

Apart from the Plantations Labour Housing Scheme there is the Industrial Labour Housing Scheme which is applicable to factory workers. The Assam Government have been urging the industry to take advantage of this scheme and have agreed to sponsor applications for loans required for the construction of houses for factory labour.

**Labour Welfare.**—(1) *Assam : (a) Rowriah Welfare Training Centre.*—The training courses at the Rowriah Welfare Training Centre were resumed during 1957, after having been abandoned for more than a year, and the first course commenced on the 1st November when Agency Houses provided candidates from gardens under their control as they had done in the past.

(b) *Community Centres for Tea Garden Labour.*—It was recorded in last year's report that Branches were being consulted regarding the selection of suitable sites for the construction of Community Centres which it was proposed to establish on tea gardens in Assam. It was finally agreed that the Centres should be situated on the following gardens:—

- (1) Dejoo Tea Estate
- (2) Salonah Tea Estate
- (3) Koomtai Tea Estate
- (4) Langharjan Tea Estate
- (5) Bidyanagar Tea Estate

and the Agents of the gardens concerned were asked to arrange for the release to Government of the one bigha of land selected for the purpose.

While these arrangements were being made the Assam Welfare Labour Board at a meeting held on the 2nd September 1957 decided to modify their scheme for the establishment of

Community Centres and to construct instead multipurpose centres which would provide:

- (1) theatre and cinema shows in a hall with a capacity for 1000 persons
- (2) facilities for indoor and outdoor games and sports
- (3) a library and reading rooms
- (4) accommodation which could be used as a holiday resort.

In view of the extended nature of the activities of these Centres Government asked the selected gardens to provide five bighas of land instead of the one bigha previously asked for. This demand for such a large increase in land resulted in the gardens concerned reconsidering their offers and the subject is still under examination.

(2) *West Bengal: (a) Model Welfare Centres.*—As part of the Second Five-Year Plan the Government of West Bengal proposed to establish five Welfare Centres in the Tea Districts and the Labour Commissioner enquired whether tea gardens could provide plots for this purpose measuring not less than fourteen cottahs as a free gift or on a nominal rent. Government's intention was to establish three centres in the Dooars and two centres in Darjeeling with the help of a grant from the Tea Board. In so far as Darjeeling was concerned the Association explained that tea estates would not be able to provide land as all their surplus areas would be acquired under the Estates Acquisition Act. It was suggested instead that Government might try to find suitable sites on Government land.

It appears that eventually Government were able to secure land for their Model Welfare Centres at the Satali Tea Estate (Eastern Dooars) and at the Somripani Division near Phokirabong Bazar (Darjeeling) and that the Tea Board made a grant of Rs. 1,21,700/- for the establishment of the Centres.

(3) *Tea Board Projects: (a) Welfare Officers.*—The Tea Board appointed two Welfare Officers, one for North India and one for South India, to assist the Board in dealing with welfare matters for tea garden labour.

(b) *Scholarship Scheme*.—The Board continued to grant stipends to the children/wards of tea garden workers attending approved schools, colleges and other training institutions. With a view to assisting the children of tea garden workers to obtain suitable vocational training the Tea Board's Welfare Officer contacted various institutions and circulated details of the courses available to Producers as well as to recognised Trade Unions. In some cases the Board arranged for the reservation of seats and hostel accommodation for tea garden candidates, who were later able to secure stipends to cover the costs of training. The Rules for obtaining Tea Board Stipends were somewhat modified during the year and the revised Rules are reproduced in the Appendix to this report.

(c) *Bharat Scouts and Guides*.—To provide employment to the dependants of tea garden workers the Tea Board arranged for the training of garden candidates as Scoutmasters and Cubmasters by the Bharat Scouts and Guides.

(d) *Sports and Games*.—The Tea Board asked the Association for its views on a suggestion that the Board should make grants towards and organise sports and games in the tea districts. The Association indicated that it was not in favour of the Board sponsoring inter-district or inter-garden football or hockey matches because experience had shown that such encounters very often led to unruly incidents. The Association, however, expressed itself as in support of organised Athletic meets, P.T. displays, folk dances, volley ball, kabadi, etc.

The Board appears to have accepted these suggestions and at the time of writing arrangements are being made for an Athletic Sports meeting to be held in the Dooars sometime in March 1958.

**Medical Services on Tea Estates.**—As tea gardens are required under the Plantation Labour Rules to submit to Government periodical returns showing the progress being made by them in providing medical facilities for their workers the usual reports collected by the Association in this connection were discontinued. Members were asked however to send the Asso-

ciation copies of their returns to Government and the standards reached at the 30th June, 1957 are recorded for information.

	Members standards as at 30-6-57.	Plantation Labour Rules Standard
	Per Thousand Workers	
Hospital Beds	24.63	15.00
Doctors	1.21	0.57
Midwives	1.21	0.57
Nurses	1.51	1.43
Compounders	1.16	0.57
Anti Malaria Health Assistants	0.61	0.48

**Labour Relations.**— In 1957, 52 strikes were reported from member gardens as compared with 76 in 1956. In 29 of these instances the stoppage of work lasted not more than one day while in 11 cases only the strikes continued for more than 5 days. The number of man-days lost rose to 189,578 from 108,419 in 1956. The loss of production was estimated at 13,953 maunds of tea against a loss of 7,661 maunds of tea in 1956. A brief analysis of the statistics in respect of each district is given in the following paragraphs in which for the purposes of comparison the corresponding figures for 1956 are shown in brackets.

In the Assam Valley 12(6) strikes occurred involving 6,007 (3,631) workers; 38,597 (27,862) man days were lost with a loss in wages of Rs. 54,088 (Rs. 49,986). Production losses amounted to 3,751 (2,245) maunds.

In Cachar there were 5 (5) strikes. The number of workers involved totalled 2,138 (1,750) and the man days lost were 32,105 (4,208). The loss in wages amounted to Rs. 25,577 (Rs. 4,798).

In the Dooars there were 29 (58) strikes involving 22,154 (48,173) workers. The number of man days lost was 68,850 (63,785) and the wages lost amounted to Rs. 116,121

(Rs. 98,774). The loss in production amounted to 9,444 (4,733) maunds.

In Darjeeling 6 (7) strikes took place in 1957 involving 3,227 (3,534) workers. The number of man days lost amounted to 50,026 (12,564) while the loss in wages was estimated at Rs. 63,760 (Rs. 21,501). The loss in production amounted to 758 (683) maunds.

**The Industrial Disputes Act.**— Last year's report described the considerable revision of the Industrial Disputes Act which was effected by the passing of the Industrial Disputes (Amendment and Miscellaneous Provisions) Act, 1956. On 9th March, 1957 a notification was published by the Government of India bringing all sections of the amended Act into force with immediate effect.

Among the alterations resulting from the amendment of the Act, the requirement that 21 days' notice of change must be given in respect of changes in hours of work and rest intervals, shift working and alterations in the numbers employed in different occupations or departments seemed likely to present special difficulties for the Tea Industry. The Association had already submitted representations regarding these difficulties when the Amendment Act was still in draft form and, when its provisions were brought into force in March, it urged upon the Governments of Assam and West Bengal that, having regard to the fact that changes in productive operations in the Tea Industry had to be effected at very short notice as a result of climatic and natural factors, the Industry should be exempted from the need to give as much notice as 21 days in respect of the changes mentioned above. These representations, it is gratifying to record, were successful. In West Bengal the State Government issued a notification specifically exempting the Tea Industry from these particular sections of the amended Act; while in Assam the convention was accepted that an estate would not be regarded as having effected a change in terms of service if it was merely following the seasonal variations adopted in previous years, and that formal notice of change would only be required if there was a definite break with previous practice.

**Recruitment of Labour.**—(a) *Tea Districts Emigrant Labour Rules.*—In January 1957 the Government of India, Ministry of Labour, asked for the Association's views on a proposed amendment to Rule 58(2) of the Tea Districts Emigrant Labour Rules which would make it obligatory for the employer to provide an assisted emigrant with the same facilities on repatriation as he had had when he was recruited. The rule as it stands at present requires such facilities to be given to the emigrant only if he is repatriated by the same organisation through which he was recruited. The Association together with the Tea Districts Labour Association strongly opposed the amendment suggested on the grounds that the labour were much more sophisticated than they had been in the past and they could therefore quite easily return to their native homes without assistance. In fact managers now-a-days booked repatriates back to their homes after providing them with a subsistence allowance. If the rule was amended as proposed it would mean that employers would have to use the TDLA or similar organisations to repatriate their labour. As far as the TDLA was concerned it was pointed out that this organisation had been compelled to reduce its establishment and to close down its agencies in various parts of India owing to a lack of demand for labour and it would be an unnecessary waste if these agencies had to be re-established just to provide repatriated workers, who had originally been recruited through them, with the facilities that they had enjoyed on recruitment.

(b) *Surplus Labour in Assam.*—In previous reports it was recorded that the Government of Assam were opposed to labour being brought into Assam from other States in view of the fact that many tea gardens were burdened with surplus labour. At Government's request the Tea Districts Labour Association had set up forwarding depots in Assam to assist in the transfer of labour from surplus areas to those which needed labour. These efforts, however, were not very successful and eventually the local depots were closed down.

As a result of the reduction in the number of labourers recruited from other States for work in Assam the Tea Districts Labour Association gradually curtailed its establishment and



shut down a large number of its recruiting stations. The Controller of Emigrant Labour was somewhat anxious as to what arrangements would remain for the forwarding and repatriation of labour from those areas in which the recruitment establishments had been closed down. The Controller was assured that members would abide by the provisions of the Tea Districts Emigrant Labour Act in so far as the recruitment of labour was concerned and that where they were members of the Tea Districts Labour Association they would no doubt obtain their labour through the Ranchi Agency, which it was understood would continue to operate.

In so far as the repatriation of labour were concerned it was understood that the Tea Districts Labour Association would maintain a sufficient establishment to deal with such labourers as might be returning home during the 1957/58 season. In view of the fact that new recruitment had been considerably reduced repatriations would also tend to diminish and there should be no difficulties on this account.

**Over-Population on Tea Estates.**—It has been evident for many years that one of India's fundamental problems is the rapid and enormous growth of her population, and during recent years this problem has been the source of much difficulty and anxiety for the Tea Industry. Towards the end of 1956 in the face of increasing over-population on tea estates with a consequent growth of unemployment and a serious threat of future instability, the subject received much anxious thought by many of the industry's leading representatives; and, throughout 1957, the problem figured largely in the deliberations of the Association's Committee. An obvious solution was of course the prosecution of an active family planning campaign among the industry's labour force but—while family planning was officially accepted by the Government of India and was being actively pursued by the Family Planning Association of India, and while it was already a statutory liability on tea estates under the Plantation Labour Act to maintain family planning clinics in their hospitals—it was realised that, on a subject of such extreme delicacy, precipitate or unilateral action by employers might well be misinterpreted and might provoke serious hostility

After much careful thought and study and after informal contacts with the official agencies concerned, the Committee of the Association came to the conclusion that the Industry might give a two-fold form of support to family planning measures : it might, in the first place, ensure that its medical personnel were fully trained in family planning theory and techniques, so as to be able to give advice on the subject whenever requested ; and, secondly, it might encourage Government to extend their family planning campaigns into the tea districts and pledge its support and co-operation in achieving the success of those campaigns.

In consonance with these principles, the Association interested itself when the Government of Assam announced the appointment of a Family Planning Board and a seat on the Board was obtained for the Association's Shillong Adviser. The first meeting of the Board took place in December, 1957, and, while the deliberations on that occasion were mainly of a preliminary and exploratory character, the Association's representative took the opportunity of pressing for the establishment of family planning centres in the actual tea districts.

As regards the training of medical personnel in the Industry, the Association obtained much valuable assistance from the Family Planning Association of India. In the latter part of the year the Association took advantage of an offer from this organisation to put one of its experts, Dr. Devi Krishna Rao, at the Industry's disposal for the purpose of touring the tea districts, on the understanding that the Association would meet all travelling expenses and Dr. Krishna Rao would be provided with accommodation throughout her tours. A prolonged tour was accordingly arranged for Dr. Krishna Rao during the cold weather of 1957/58, and during the last six weeks of the year she conducted a series of five-day courses for medical personnel at centres throughout the Dooars. Her courses which consisted of lectures and clinical demonstrations, and which dealt with the theory and technique of family planning, the best method of presentation, and the organisation of family planning clinics—have been warmly received by the medical staff in the Dooars and have been commented on most favourably. At the

time of writing Dr. Krishna Rao is conducting a similar series of courses in Assam and it is intended that a further series will be held in Cachar during April.

**Foodgrains Supply, 1957.**— The deterioration in the foodgrains position in Assam, noted in the last Report, continued progressively throughout the year under review. In January 1957 the average price of rice was Rs. 21/10/0, rising by June 1957 to Rs. 25/5/0; by the close of the year the price had hardened still further. With the price being in excess of the rate at which tea garden labourers are entitled to purchase from the garden, the amount issued during the course of the year was substantial, amounting to 13½ lakh maunds. Of this, 8½ lakh maunds were imported by the Association from Calcutta. Purchases in Assam slightly exceeded 5½ lakh maunds. Opening stocks in the Assam Valley at the commencement of the year were 1½ lakh maunds and the closing stock amounted to 2½ lakh maunds, a figure not entirely satisfactory, considering the steady off-take even in the winter months. Serious difficulties were, however, avoided, as the Association were able to purchase the bulk of their requirements relatively early in the year. There was no Government procurement and no price control in operation. In the Assam Valley the purchase and distribution of rice, except in the surplus Circles of Mangaldai, Nowgong and North Lakhimpur, was arranged through Messrs. Steel Brothers & Co., Ltd. who conducted operations with their traditional efficiency. The main rice crop in the Assam Valley was, generally, below average and Nowgong, which in the past has been an important supply area, experienced adverse weather conditions.

In the Surma Valley, though the situation was a little uneasy in the early part of the year, a good aus crop brought relief and prices declined considerably, with the result that off-take the whole year amounted to a little over ½ lakh maunds. In Cachar the Branch assumed responsibility for purchase and distribution. Towards the close of the year prices had begun to rise as a result of the export of rice and paddy to the Assam Valley.

**Rehabilitation of Refugees in Cachar.** Unsettled conditions in East Pakistan had led to an increase in the refugee exodus from Sylhet from about the middle of 1956 and the influx had reached such serious proportions that the Government of Assam was constrained to take steps to provide land for the rehabilitation of these displaced persons. The Deputy Commissioner, Cachar therefore called upon tea gardens in that district to surrender any surplus land available for this purpose. The experience of tea gardens in rehabilitating refugees in the past was not a very happy one and managers were naturally not very anxious to increase the number of refugees on their lands. Nevertheless in view of Government's urgent need gardens were asked to provide land for the rehabilitation of refugees on the garden's perimeter, which could be surrendered to Government without affecting the entity of the garden.

**Land Requisition in Assam.** Early in the year under review the Forests Department of the Government of Assam advised estates that Government had prepared a scheme under the Second Five-Year Plan to acquire for forestry purposes such areas of private land containing tree forests as were fit for retention and improvement as forests. In pursuance of this scheme the Forests Department proposed to undertake a survey of forest lands and to arrange for the requisition of suitable lands for forestry purposes. It was made clear that Government did not wish to acquire land which tea estates might require for tea cultivation or some other use.

As Government's proposals to conserve the forest wealth of tea estates were considered eminently in keeping with the best interests of the tea estates themselves, managers were urged to co-operate with the Forests Department in the survey proposed. It was also recommended that where gardens were capable of looking after the forest lands in their own grants they should submit to the Forests Department working plans for the maintenance of these lands as forests. In other cases it was suggested that the land should be surrendered to the Forests Department, which was prepared to pay reasonable compensation, rather than allow the lands to be requisitioned for other purposes.

**Introduction of the Metric System of Weights and Measures.—**

Government are pledged to convert the country's system of weights and measures to the metric system, and last year's report described a meeting with the Secretary of the Standing Metric Committee at which the problems facing the Tea Industry in relation to the change were discussed. At that meeting the Association's representatives laid particular stress on the complexity of the problems which the conversion to the metric system would produce for the Industry, and on the need for caution and forethought in proceeding with the change.

There was no further development until May, 1957, when the Tea Board announced that it had been asked by the Standing Metric Committee to work out a phased programme for the conversion, to commence on 1st April, 1958. For that purpose the Board convened a Conference of representatives of the Industry and Trade, to be held towards the end of June, and as a preliminary to this meeting the Association asked its branches for their general views on the subject. Replies were almost unanimous : the great need was for caution, for the avoidance of any conflict with labour or interference with export markets, and fears were expressed that 1st April, 1958 might be too early a date for the commencement of the conversion programme.

In the event, the Conference convened by the Tea Board, which took place on 29th June, proved reassuring. The Government representatives present showed themselves fully alive to the problems with which the Trade and Industry would be faced and ready to adopt a practical approach to their solution. The Conference, in fact, was concerned not so much to take decisions on the subject as to ventilate the problems that would arise and indicate the lines on which it might be possible to evolve a workable programme. The principal problem, it was agreed, would be the change in wage rates, plucking rates, etc. and not only was it agreed that 1st April, 1960 would be sufficiently early to effect the wage change but the Chairman of the Tea Board made the useful suggestion that the process of education might be assisted by a preliminary period during which the existing and metric systems would be

used side by side. A change which, it was agreed, would also involve a considerable amount of detailed work was the alteration in land measurement from acres to hectares. Emphasis was also placed on the need for avoiding any interference with the Trade with countries which did not use the metric system and particularly with London.

No further developments took place during the remainder of the year except that in November the West Bengal Branch of the Standing Metric Committee announced that the commencement of the conversion programme would be postponed from 1st April to 1st October, 1958. At the time of writing however, it seems probable that further action will shortly be initiated, and the subject is accordingly receiving the Association's close study.

**Introduction of Decimal Coinage.**— Allied with the adoption of the metric system of weights and measures is the conversion of the national currency to the decimal system, which far-reaching change was initiated on 1st April, 1957. Prior to the introduction date, the Association consulted its branches as to how the wage problem should be handled, and in March a Special Sub-Committee was appointed to consider the subject. Since indications were that, at the beginning, a comparatively small amount of the new coinage would be available to the public, and since also the adoption of the decimal system might involve fractional changes in wage rates which would require consultation with Government and the Unions, the conclusion was eventually come to and was intimated to members by circular—that it would be unwise to convert wage payments immediately and that for the present the procedure should be to maintain the existing payments system and at the end of each wage period to convert fractions of rupees to the decimal coinage by the use of the official conversion table. This practice was accordingly followed by all the Branches but, as time went on, the new coinage became more plentiful, particularly, in the Docars, and it was thought that in this district an endeavour might be made to adopt a decimal wage system. This would require some very slight adjustment in wage rates however and, on the Association approaching the Government of West

Bengal. Government advised that the matter should not be dealt with precipitately, particularly since the report of the Minimum Wages Advisory Committee was expected shortly. Accordingly, no thorough change in the wage system was introduced, despite the fact that decimal coins became increasingly available as the year progressed.

**Import Advisory Council.**—The Import Advisory Council, which was reconstituted during the year, held two meetings : one on the 25th May, 1957 and the other on the 8th September, 1957.

At the first meeting the Association asked the Bengal Chamber of Commerce & Industry to draw Government's attention to the difficulties experienced by the Industry as a result of the restrictions on the import of tea machinery, spare parts and Prime movers. At the second meeting the Chamber was asked to suggest a relaxation in the import policy relating to Cement and to draw attention to the machinery needs of the tea industry.

**Coal Supplies.**— The coal requirements of member gardens in North Bengal, Cachar and the Assam Valley for 1957 were :—

71,575 tons for North Bengal gardens (Dooars, Terai and Darjeeling).

22,500 tons for Cachar gardens.

1,03,762 tons for Assam Valley gardens.

Coal for North Bengal gardens was transported by three separate routes, the all-rail route via Bhagalpur and via Mokamehghat, the Indo-Pakistan rail route via Haldibari and via Santahar and the river-cum-rail route via Dhubri. The small quota of 2 B. G. wagons per day via Bhagalpur and Mokamehghat was used to serve the requirements of gardens in the Darjeeling area only, while the via Haldibari route was utilised to despatch the requirements of gardens in the Western Dooars, Terai and Darjeeling. The coal requirements of gardens in the East and Central Dooars were moved by the rail route via Santahar and by the river-cum-rail route via Dhubri.

Coal by the Indo-Pakistan rail route was despatched in block rakes of 60 B. G. wagons each, out of which the Association was allotted a fair share and, although there were many cancellations and restrictions imposed by the railways during the season, it was this rapid method of transportation that was mainly responsible for the early completion of the season's requirements of coal which were despatched in full by the middle of August. Of the total quantity of 73,573 tons despatched to North Bengal gardens rail movement accounted for 55,319 tons (75%) and river-cum-rail 18,254 tons (25%).

The only drawback in the rake loading scheme was the inability of the collieries to ensure the loading of good quality coal owing to heavy loco commitments and the need to concentrate on speed rather than on quality. This resulted, as in the previous year, in numerous complaints from garden managers regarding the poor quality of coal received and, despite strong representations in this regard, there was no indication of any substantial improvement in quality. In view of the large number of complaints against quality as well as the difficulty experienced by some collieries in maintaining adequate stocks of Selected Grade "B" coal for ready loading of rakes, the Association requested the Deputy Coal Controller to allow the tea industry to revert to the use of Selected Grade "A" coal which had been denied to it for the past three years. In reply the Association was informed that in view of the fact that Selected Grade "A" collieries were committed to supply other essential and important consumers he could not see how it was possible for them to meet the demands of the tea industry. It was further pointed out by him that the revised grade restrictions were introduced after thorough investigations conducted by the Chief Combustion Engineer of the Coal Controller's Organisation with due consideration to the fact that there would be no possibility of the efficiency of any undertaking being lost with the introduction of Selected Grade "B" coal. If, he said, tea gardens had any difficulty in obtaining the required quantity of Selected Grade "B" coal they were at liberty to take other grades of coal lower than Selected Grade "B"



Despatches against 1958 commenced in the third week of August and up to the end of January, 1958 some 28,000 tons of coal had been despatched to North Bengal gardens. Stocks at the gardens, particularly in the Dooars, are reported to be not unsatisfactory and it is hoped that the bulk of the new season's requirements will be on the gardens before the commencement of the rains.

Supplies to Cachar gardens were made as in the previous year from Assam collieries but, in view of the annually recurring failure of Assam collieries to fulfil their commitments and also because of the difficulties encountered last year due to the belated release of Bengal Coal, the Coal Controller agreed to an allocation of 8000 tons of Bengal Coal to Cachar to be moved as soon as the river was open to navigation. Despatches commenced in May and the entire quantity of 8000 tons was despatched by the first week of September. Despatches from all sources during the coal year from 1st September, 1956 to 31st August, 1957 totalled approximately 20,460 tons or about 91% of indented requirements.

The decision to supply Bengal Coal to Cachar was greatly appreciated by garden managers who have always held the view that without the supply of good quality coal from Bengal to mix with other inferior coal which is supplied from Assam they will continue to experience difficulty in raising sufficient steam to produce and maintain the correct temperatures which are so essential in the manufacture of good tea. This opinion, unfortunately, is not shared by the Coal Control authorities who have repeatedly asserted that coal from the Assam mines is, if used in the proper manner, in no way inferior to that obtained from the Bengal coalfields. For the coming season therefore only Assam Coal is to be supplied to Cachar.

As regards the Assam Valley, allocations from Assam collieries were made as follows:—

Ledo	...	...	12,050 tons
Dilli	...	...	9,356 ..
Jeypore	...	...	10,711 ..
Koilajan	...	...	11,553 ..
Nazira	...	...	5,447 ..
Khasi	...	...	59,116 ..

Total	...	...	1,08,233 tons
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To this was added a quantity of 10,000 tons of Bengal Coal for distribution to gardens situated in the North Bank area as well as gardens in the Nowgong, Golaghat and Jorhat Circles.

Deliveries were made as usual by rail from the collieries in Assam to the various depots maintained by the Assam Branch which arranges final distribution to gardens. Supply of Khasi Coal was made both by rail and by river from Gauhati through the distribution arrangements of Messrs. Steel Brothers & Co., Ltd. Movement of Bengal Coal by river flat from Calcutta commenced in February and was completed by the middle of June. Total deliveries in the Assam Valley up to the end of August, inclusive of 10,000 tons of Bengal Coal, amounted to 1,16,215 tons.

Instead of the usual 50% allocation of Ledo Coal this year the allocation from the Ledo Collieries was equivalent to roughly 12% of the total allocation while Khasi Coal was increased to 53%. Although standards for Khasi Coal have been laid down by the Controller it is regretted that these standards are seldom complied with and, despite numerous complaints from garden managers, very little is done to effect an improvement in quality. Unless drastic measures are taken by the Government against those collieries which make no effort to improve the quality of their coal the interests of consumers will continue to suffer through the continued use of poor quality coal.

**Iron & Steel.**— The production of Iron & Steel in 1957 was higher than in 1956. Despite the increase in production however there was still not enough steel in the country to serve the requirements of all consumers. On account of the shortage of Foreign Exchange, the Government necessarily had to restrict imports and this aggravated the situation further.

The supply of Galvanised Sheets and particularly Plates continued to be critical and consumers were requested in their own interests to restrict their orders for these categories of steel to the minimum.

Since the recovery from the crisis of 1952 there has been a steady increase in the demand for steel from the Tea Industry

both for essential repairs and maintenance and for development and extension work. During 1957 however, as members were asked to keep their indents as low as possible in view of the difficult supply position demand fell as will be seen from the figures given below:—

	1957	1956
(1) Maintenance & Repairs ...	2638.65 tons	4744 tons
(2) Development & Extensions ...	214.39 „	2602 „

On account of the difficulties experienced by the issue of Annual Quota Certificates the Iron & Steel Controller decided to revert to the system of quarterly Quota Certificates from 1957-58 onwards. The demand of individual gardens however had to be considered on an annual basis, with quarterly allocations, in order to enable Government to estimate the total requirements for the year.

The prospects of obtaining steel in the coming season do not appear to be at all encouraging. Government have decided to supply as much as possible of the steel required for the Second Five Year Plan Core Projects, the surplus, if available, being allocated to other consumers. Tea has not been included in the Core Projects.

**Cement.**— The supply of cement to tea estates remained during the year under the control of the Regional Honorary Cement Adviser who allotted permits on the basis of applications submitted through the Tea Board. The procedure laid down by the Tea Board for the submission and sponsoring of applications for quotas worked satisfactorily.

Early in the year the Association addressed the Tea Board on the subject of shortage of cement pointing out the difficulties confronting the tea industry in the implementation of the various provisions of the Plantations Labour Act which call for the construction of a large number of new buildings on each estate while the allocations of cement to the industry were becoming steadily smaller each year. The shortage of cement was not only preventing the industry from discharging its statutory

obligations but was also the cause of great difficulty in carrying out routine essential work of repairs and maintenance. The need for increased imports of cement was stressed since the shortage of indigenous cement was aggravated by internal transport difficulties which result in delays of several months before despatches can be made against permits already granted. The Tea Board was asked to make an urgent review of the cement supply position and to support the Association's strong recommendation that provision should be made for increased imports of cement at the earliest possible date.

These difficulties had been recognized by the Tea Board which was in constant touch with the Government of India in an effort to secure a larger allocation of cement for the tea industry, but unfortunately, in view of the acute scarcity of cement in the country owing to increasing demands from all quarters, it was not possible to obtain a higher allocation from Government. The Tea Board, however, had recommended that the meagre allotments made each period to the industry should be used only for essential repairs, extensions to factories, and installation of machinery etc. The building of houses, hospitals and schools, it stated, could be taken up when the supply position improved substantially.

The total tonnage of cement, both indigenous and imported, allotted for the various periods against the demands submitted by the tea industry was as follows :—

	<i>Demand.</i>	<i>Allotment.</i>
	<i>Tons.</i>	<i>Tons.</i>
Period I	40,341	5,110
Period II	44,914	2,750
Period III	52,232	15,000
Period IV	52,042	18,000
	<hr/> 1,89,529	<hr/> 40,860

The quantity allotted was equivalent to approximately 21% of the total demand of the industry as compared with 20% allotted in the previous year.

In a recent press announcement, it was reported that in view of the sizeable rise in cement production in 1957 and the decline in consumption by Central and State projects due to the slackening of pace caused by shortage of foreign exchange and steel, the supply position has eased considerably and because of this the Government of India have suggested to the State Governments the abolition of the existing system of permits for distribution of cement. The proposed relaxation, of course, relates only to the distribution machinery at State level and will therefore benefit primarily private individuals who will now be able to buy cement without permits. The present system of the Central Government allocating quarterly quotas for the States, railways, Central projects and scheduled industries, including the tea industry will, however, continue. Government hope that it will be possible to maintain this satisfactory supply position in coming years in spite of the possible rise in demand. The increase in cement production has also been reflected in the quota allotted to the industry for the first quarter of 1958, which is equivalent to 45.90% of the total demand for that period, and it is hoped that it will become possible for tea gardens to receive higher allocations as the year progresses.

**Fertilisers.**—(a) *Supply.*—In last year's report it was recorded that the Government of India had fixed the ex works price of Sulphate of Ammonia at Rs. 335 per ton and the pool price at Rs. 365 per ton and that tea gardens which received their supplies by the rail cum steamer route had to pay an additional Rs. 25/- per ton.

In April, 1957 the Tea Board informed Fertiliser Companies that the Government of India had decided to increase with effect from the 26th March the ex works price of Sulphate of Ammonia in the case of tea plantations to Rs. 375/- per long ton and the pool price to Rs. 405/- per long ton. As this increase in the cost of fertilizers would add to the burden of costs borne by the Tea Industry the Association asked the Tea Board to make enquiries into the matter with a view to obtaining some relief for tea companies on this account.

In June, however, the Tea Board announced that Government had decided further to modify the price of Sulphate of Ammonia by increasing the ex works price to Rs. 392/- per ton and the pool price to Rs. 422/-. The additional charge of Rs. 25/- which was levied on supplies sent by the rail cum river route was to be abolished. This arrangement had been made by Government because of the ban that existed on the despatch of fertilizers to Assam by the all rail route.

This change in the price of Sulphate of Ammonia was no doubt of benefit to tea gardens in Assam but it involved a further increase of Rs. 17/- per ton in the supplies of tea gardens in West Bengal which had been accustomed to get their requirements by the all rail route.

The Association, therefore, asked the Tea Board to take this matter up with the Government of India and to point out that the price structure fixed was not only discriminatory as between the tea industry and other agriculture but was also discriminatory between tea estates in North India and South India as the following figures show :—

	<i>Tea Industry</i>		<i>Other Agriculture</i>
	<i>N. India</i>	<i>S. India</i>	
	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
Ex. Works Price ...	375	375	350
Pool Price ...	405	405	380
Equalised freight charge	17	Nil	Nil
	<hr/> 422 <hr/>	<hr/> 405 <hr/>	<hr/> 380 <hr/>

The Association's representation was forwarded to the Government of India by the Tea Board but Government declined to modify the prices fixed by them.

(b) *Popularisation of Ammonium Sulphate Nitrate and Urea.*—In last year's report it was recorded that the Government of India were anxious to popularise the use of Calcium Ammonium Nitrate, Ammonium Sulphate Nitrate and Urea in view of the likely shortage in future years of Sulphate of Ammonia and that the Association had voiced its objections

to the use of the new fertilisers. These objections were passed on by the Tea Board to the Government of India, who referred the matter to the Standing Committee of Experts on Manures and Fertilisers. This Committee at a meeting held on the 10th and 11th May, 1957 agreed that Calcium Ammonium Nitrate would not be suitable for tea but insisted that Urea and Ammonium Sulphate Nitrate could be used by tea estates and that the difficulties arising from the hygroscopicity of these fertilisers could be overcome by the use of suitable bags.

The Association, however, could not agree with the view that the difficulties that would arise in connection with the use of these highly hygroscopic fertilisers could be solved by the use of suitable bags and attention was drawn to Tocklai's views on this subject as published in the June issue of "Two and a Bud". As a result of these representation the Government of India agreed to invite a representative from Tocklai to attend the next meeting of its Standing Committee of Experts on Manures when the subject would be discussed. The meeting took place on the 25th/26th October and was attended by the Senior Physical Chemist, Mr. N. G. Gokhale. The difficulties of using the new fertilisers were explained at the meeting but it was generally agreed that the new fertilisers would have to be used by tea plantations to an increasing extent in view of the anticipated shortage of Sulphate of Ammonia. Gardens, would, however, be free to buy their Nitrogen requirements in any form they chose and there would be no compulsion on them to accept mixtures containing the new fertilisers.

**Tea Chests.**—(a) *Protection to the Plywood Industry.*—In a resolution dated the 30th September, 1957 the Government of India announced that the Tariff Commission had recommended the continuance of the protection granted to the plywood and tea chests industry for a further period of three years up to the 31st December, 1960. Among the other recommendations made by the Commission the following were of special interest to the Association:—

- (i) the export of plywood panels (tea chests, commercial and decorative) should be prohibited unless they conform to the relevant I.S.I. standard.

- (ii) no new units should be allowed to be established and if demand increased the capacity of existing units should be increased.
- (iii) a proper system of inspection of battens should be introduced and the use of untested panels and battens for the packing of tea should be banned.
- (iv) The Tea Board should institute a scheme for the inspection of tea chest assembly.

(b) *Specifications for Tea Chest Battens.*—Early in the year the Tea Board announced that, following the receipt of complaints from overseas about the deterioration of tea owing to the use of defective packing materials, it had been decided that, as in the case of panels, a control should be exercised over the manufacture of tea chest battens; the Tea Board accordingly asked for the Association's views on the subject and sought information regarding existing manufacturers of battens, prices and quality. In reply the Association welcomed the proposal to exercise control over batten manufacturers and suggested that the control should take the same form as that over tea chest panels, namely the registration of factories, their strict inspection and the grant of approval to them only if they conformed to strict quality standards. As regards standards it was suggested that battens for 19"×19"×24" chests should conform to the following specifications:—

8--Batten Type Chests 8 pcs. of 18.5'8"×7'8"×3/4"  
mitred ends.

12--Batten Type Chests 4 pcs. of 21.7'8"×7'8"×3/4"  
square ends.  
8 pcs. of 18.5'8"×7'8"×3/4"  
mitred ends.

and that they should also satisfy the following criteria:—

- (a) Planed to a smooth finish.
- (b) All top and bottom battens should be mitred in such a manner that two battens mitred to the same angle, placed together, form an angle of 90 degrees.



- (c) In length, width and depth within the limits of plus or minus 1/16" of the measurements given.
- (d) Made from seasoned Fir or Light Fine, having no sign of resinous secretion or resinous smell.
- (e) Dry, odourless, and free from knots, cracks and other blemishes which, as Judged by the consignee, impair the serviceability of the batten in any degree.
- (f) Sufficiently strong to withstand a sharp blow on a concrete floor.
- (g) Free from any trace or suspicion of ant, borer or other similar infection, non-compliance with which should render the whole consignment liable to rejection.
- (h) Conform to the standards of the Forest Research Institute, Dehra Dun.
- (i) Battens to be marked with the name of the manufacturer.

The Tea Board was also asked to consider exercising control over the manufacture of tea chest fittings.

No further developments took place in this connection

(c) *Use of uncertified Tea Chests.*—As mentioned earlier the Tariff Commission had recommended that a ban should be placed on the export of tea chests which did not conform to the I.S.I. Standard and that the use of untested panels and battens should be prohibited. In a notification dated the 7th December the Government of India announced that teas sold at auctions held in India would only be allowed to be exported if they were packed in tea chests which were certified by an Inspector of the Development Wing in the Ministry of Commerce and Industry as conforming to I.S.I. Specifications.

This order is due to come into force on the 1st June, 1958 but the Association in the meantime has submitted representations for an extension of time to permit of the consumption of

imported and uncertified chests already in the hands of producers.

**Tea Drier Oil.** - Tea Drier Oil had in the past been classed as Furnace Oil and was therefore subject to excise duty at the rate of Rs. 15/- per ton. The Finance Act of 1956, however, altered the specifications with the result that tea drier oil was treated as diesel oil and became subject to an excise duty of Rs. 30/- per ton. In view of this alteration in duty the oil suppliers altered their quality of tea drier oil so as to keep it within the classification of furnace oil. While this new quality of oil worked well enough in the tea driers it left a larger quantity of carbon residue in the valves, inlets and exhaust pipes of prime movers, which soon got choked unless they were frequently cleaned.

The Association therefore took the matter up with the Central Board of Revenue and asked whether the specifications could be so altered as to allow the former quality of Tea Drier Oil to be classified as furnace oil. Unfortunately the Association's request did not find favour with the Board who stated that they could not change the specifications to suit the Tea Industry, and that if the present grade of oil was unsuitable, it was open to the industry to use a better quality and pay the higher rate of Excise Duty fixed for that type of oil.

As the attitude of Government was considered unreasonable, a further representation was made urging a reconsideration of the matter in view of the fact that the use of a better quality of tea drier oil would add to the already heavy burden of costs of manufacturing tea.

**Freight rates on Tea : Tea Carriage Agreement.** As a result of increased operational costs arising from a revision in the terms of employment of their staff the Joint Steamer Companies had imposed a surcharge of one anna in the rupee (6½%) with effect from the 1st February, 1956 on all traffic excepting foodgrains and coaching traffic. At the end of May, 1957 the Companies announced that their existing freight charges were proving extremely uneconomical and that they had therefore decided to increase the surcharge from 6½% to 18½% with effect from the 1st July, 1957.

While the proposed increase in the freight rates for tea was unwelcome, the Association had to accept it because it was agreed that it was unavoidable if the steamer companies were to be expected to maintain their services at their existing standards.

**Transfer of teas from the T. T. Sheds to Sale Tea Warehouses.—**

In November the Steamer Companies advised the Association that for financial reasons it would no longer be possible for them to meet the cost of transferring teas from the Tea Transit Sheds to the Sale Tea Warehouses and that this cost would have to be borne by the owners of the teas. In view of the circumstances explained, the Association agreed to accept this additional charge which amounted to Rs. 8-8-3 per 100 chests for chests on the top floor of the T.T. Sheds and Rs. 8-11-0 per 100 chests for chests on the lower floor of the T.T. Sheds.

**Transit Space and Warehousing.**—Owing to the heavy congestion which took place in the port in July and August as a result of the slow turn round of oceangoing vessels the Port Commissioners appointed an Officer as Director of Operations to examine the accommodation available for tea and the way in which the tea trade could co-operate in relieving the over-all port congestion.

At the request of this Officer the Chairman of the Tea Board convened a conference of the trade on the 17th September at which the Association was duly represented. It was agreed at this Conference—

- (1) that the Port Commissioners should take over the sheds of the Union South Jute Mill on the foreshore for use by the Steamer Companies as T.T. sheds and that No. 8 Calcutta Jetty, which was currently in use by the tea trade, should be vacated.
- (2) that the warehousing accommodation at present in use at No. 3 K.G.D. should be vacated by the tea trade, which would be given back the R. J. & O. sheds, to which they were entitled, in November.

As a result of these recommendations the River Steamer Companies used as transit accommodation the main T.T. sheds.

and the sheds at Union South Jute Mill and at Juggernath Ghat. As far as warehousing accommodation was concerned the trade was at first allowed to retain a part of the first floor of No. 3 K.G.D. Later when the R. J. & G. sheds could not be released for the storage of tea as promised the warehousemen were allowed to take over the remainder of the first floor and the whole of the top floor of No. 3 K.G.D.

At the end of October however the Steamer Companies complained that their flats were being held up owing to a congestion in the transit sheds and they asked the Association to agree to tea being stored in the main mill buildings of Union South Jute Mill which were available. When the original proposals had been put forward for the use of the Union South Jute Mill the Association had voiced its strong objection to use of the main mill buildings because of the danger that the teas stored therein might become tainted by the smell of batching oil. Moreover the mill was situated at a great distance from the docks and Tea Warehouses and transfers of tea had to be made by lorry along a very congested route. It was also feared that acceptance of this accommodation might encourage Government to postpone its plans for the construction of the New Libyan Warehouse for which it was understood that estimates amounting to Rs. 1,15,00,000/- had been prepared and were awaiting sanction. At the insistence of the Steamer Companies, who stated that they would otherwise be compelled to levy a demurrage charge of 2 as. per chest per day, the Association agreed to inspect the main buildings, which it was reported had since been thoroughly cleaned. As a result of this inspection and tests carried out by the brokers it was eventually agreed that the main mill buildings could be used for the storage of tea on the understanding that they would be used to accommodate only those teas which could not be stored in the main T.T. sheds or the river front sheds of the Mill. The Tea Board were also advised that this accommodation had been accepted as a temporary emergency to relieve the Steamer Companies but that such acceptance should not be permitted to jeopardise the long term plans for the warehousing of tea which were before Government. The Tea Board was able to assure the Association that the arrangement for the use of Union South

Jute Mill was purely *ad hoc* and temporary and that the Port Commissioners had not given the Board any reason to believe that the position had since changed.

**Claims on U.K. (Direct Shipment) Teas.**— Since 1955 the Calcutta Port Commissioners had been settling claims in respect of Direct Shipment teas on the basis of brokers' estimated valuation of individual consignments of damaged tea. In July the Traffic Manager announced that the Port Commissioners intended to alter this system because they could not check the broker's valuations by reference to any official publications or market reports and to settle all outstanding claims in respect of Direct Shipment teas on the basis of "District Average Prices" as published in the Calcutta Tea Market Report.

This change in procedure was strongly opposed by the Association because it was felt that its effect might well be for gardens which produce tea of qualities lower than the district average to send in a large number of claims since they would stand to gain by so doing. On the other hand, gardens producing tea with prices above the district average would feel that they were being deprived of their just dues if claims were settled in this way. The new proposal no matter how convenient from the Port Commissioners' point of view could not be said to be equitable. Nevertheless, the Association finally agreed to the adoption of the new system for a trial period.

In view of the objections raised by the Association and the Calcutta Tea Traders Association the Port Commissioners have since set up a Sub-Committee on which the Association is represented by the Hon'ble S. P. Sinha, to examine several outstanding cases along with officials of the Port Commissioners and to see how the new formula worked in these cases. It is understood that the Sub-Committee is still examining these cases.

**Excise Duty on Tea.**— (a) *Regional Excise Advisory Committees.*—During the year under review the Central Board of Revenue decided to set up Regional Advisory Committees for manufactured excisable products in each Collectorate and in pursuance of this decision Advisory Committees were set up in

Calcutta and Shillong. The functions of these Committees are of a purely advisory nature and are confined to resolving procedural difficulties experienced in Central Excise matters. The Association was represented on the Calcutta Committee through the Bengal Chamber of Commerce and Industry by Mr. G. F. Oldham of Messrs. Andrew Yule & Co., Ltd. and on the Shillong Committee by Mr. J. S. Hardman, the Shillong Adviser.

(b) *Changes in the rates of Duty.*—The Finance (No. 2) Bill of 1957 increased with effect from the 16th May, 1957 the Excise Duty payable on

(i) tea (n.o.s.) from 6 25 nP to 10 nP and

(ii) package tea from 25 nP to 45 nP.

These increases in duty were received with much consternation by all sections of the public and representations were made to Government by various affected interests. While consideration was being given to the question of whether the Association should also protest the Government of India decided to restore the rates of duty previously prevailing with effect from the 1st June 1957.

The restoration of the previous rates of duty, however, gave rise to various problems, which were mainly dealt with by the Calcutta Tea Traders Association on behalf of its buyer and seller members.

The first of these problems related to the question of whether producers would be entitled to a refund of the excess Excise duty paid by them during the period 15th May to 31st May. On examining the position it appeared that the enhanced rates of duty were collected under the terms of the Provisional Collection of Taxes Act, 1931 which laid down that a refund of duty would be admissible only if the Finance Bill when passed into an Act laid down a lower rate of duty. The Government of India had restored the old rates of duty not by amending the provisions of the Finance Bill but by a notification which exempted tea from the payment of duty in excess of the former

rates. This meant therefore that any refund of excess duty would depend on the wording of the Finance Act, when it was enacted. When the Finance Act was finally passed, it was found that it contained a section which specifically provided for the non-refund of the excess excise duty paid during the period 15th May to the 31st May, 1957.

The Calcutta Tea Traders Association had recommended to its broker members that teas at the time of auction should, with the permission of the sellers, be shown as being subject to 6.25 nP per lb. duty irrespective of whether they had paid the higher rate of 10 nP per lb. as duty. Some producers did not approve of this arrangement with the result that Buyers who purchased these teas were placed in some difficulty in that the Customs authorities were only prepared to allow shippers a credit of 6.25 nP a lb. against the export duties payable on the teas being exported, except in cases where the shipper could produce the original garden invoice signed by the Factory Officer to prove that the teas being exported had paid excise duty at the rate of 10 nP a lb.

Shippers who could not provide this evidence at the time of shipment had to make arrangements to claim a refund of the unadjusted excise duty amounting to 3.75 nP. a lb. from the Excise authorities. For this purpose, the Excise authorities laid down that all claims would have to be made to the Assistant Collector of Central Excise under whose jurisdiction the factory, whose teas were being exported, was situated and would have to be supported by various documents including the A.R.I. invoice or a certified copy thereof and a certificate from the producer, who had paid the duty authorising the shipper to claim the refund due. As teas under a single garden invoice were sometimes sold to several buyers the Collectors of Central Excise had to authorise the Factory Inspectors to sign additional copies of the ARI invoices and producers had to assist shippers in filing their claims for refund of excise duty. The procedure for claiming refunds is therefore cumbersome, and many shippers, it is understood, still have large claims outstanding.

(c) *Quarters for Excise Sepoys.*—In last year's report it was recorded that the Collector of Central Excise, Shillong had been

asked to confirm that a rent of Rs. 10/- per month could be charged for quarters supplied to excise sepoy where pucca quarters were provided. In November, 1957 the Collector replied stating that his department had no objection to paying rent at Rs. 10/- per month for residential accommodation supplied to the sepoy provided that such quarters were of pucca plinth and walls as made by the factory for its own employees.

In West Bengal the Collector of Central Excise, Calcutta passed the following orders in respect of accommodation for Excise sepoy :—

- (a) Sepoy quarters should conform to those provided for tea garden labour, the plinth area varying with the district in accordance with Government specifications.
- (b) The quarters must not be "in barracks" with those of the labourers.
- (c) Where pucca accommodation is provided a rental of Rs. 10 per month may be charged.
- (d) Where kutcha accommodation is provided a suitable *ad hoc* rental may be fixed.

(d) *Issue of Transit Notes.*—The Collector of Central Excise, Calcutta issued the following orders with the agreement of the Central Board of Revenue in connection with the piecemeal removal of tea consignments to rail heads or booking stations :—

"A manufacturer who transports part consignments by head loads or by trollies to the main road may remove the tea under cover of "Transit Notes" (Cart Chits) issued by himself covering movement of tea from the place of storage to the vehicles standing on the road. The concession will however be subject to the following conditions :—

- (a) The manufacturer must obtain a written authority from the Collector to use transit notes for removals of the foregoing description.



- (b) He must prepare a separate transit note in respect of packages of tea carried by each person or trolley.
- (c) The transit note must be in the specified form."

(e) *Duty paid Godowns.*—The draft rules, which had been prepared by the Collector of Central Excise, Calcutta for the regulation of the use of duty paid godowns and which were referred to in last year's report, were approved by the Branches and were brought into force from the 18th February, 1957 in so far as duty paid godowns outside the factory premises were concerned.

In June the use of duty paid godowns within the factory premises was sanctioned subject to the following conditions :—

- "(i) The separate godown where duty-paid tea is to be stored shall be duly declared and approved by the Assistant Collector concerned prior to any tea being stored therein.
- (ii) The godown shall be segregated from the rest of the licensed premises by effectively closing all entrances into it except one communicating only with the open space outside the main factory building, and this shall be capable of being securely locked.
- (iii) No duty paid tea shall be stored inside the estate except in such approved godown.
- (iv) No consignment of duty-paid tea shall be stored in the duty paid godown inside the licensed factory premises for a period of more than 15 days and consignments covered by not more than 3 invoices shall be stored at a time. In exceptional cases Assistant Collector may relax the storage period upto 4 weeks.
- (v) The manufacturers shall keep an account of all receipts issues and balance of the duty-paid tea in a prescribed Form.
- (vi) The Deposits in the Duty paid godown shall be made soon after the factory officer grants clearance under A. R. I. and no gate pass will be necessary for such

removals. All issues from the duty paid godown shall take place under gate pass prescribed under Rule 52 (a) of C. E. Rules, 1944. Countersignature on the gate pass may be obtained when the Factory Officer next visits the factory. Piece meal removals from the duty-paid godown to the road or rail head shall be accompanied by the relevant gate pass with an endorsement on the reverse of the gate pass giving particulars of marks and numbers of tea chests removed on each trip."

These duty-paid godowns have proved a great boon to tea estates.

(f) *Destruction of Tea Waste and Residue Teas.*—Members had for some time been experiencing difficulty in conforming with the Association's recommendation that all tea waste and residue teas should be destroyed because of the excise regulations which limited the power of the factory officer to supervise the destruction of tea waste to 20 maunds in a month. For larger quantities the services of senior officials had to be requisitioned. As this was inconvenient not only for garden managers but also for the excise authorities the Association had been pressing for a relaxation in the regulations and in October, 1957 the Central Board of Revenue enhanced the permissible quantities as follows—

1. Inspector                      Upto 20 mds. once a fortnight  
per factory in one or more lots.
2. Deputy  
Superintendent              Upto 60 mds. once every 10 days  
per factory in one or more lots.
3. Superintendent              Upto 100 mds. once a week per  
factory in one or more lots.

**Customs Reorganisation Committee.** In January 1957, the Ministry of Finance (Revenue Division) resolved to examine the Customs procedure for clearance of goods and passengers' baggage with the object of ultimately modernising and speeding up Customs methods, which were based on practices originating in the last century.

In pursuance of this resolution a Customs Reorganisation Committee under the Chairmanship of Mr. F. C. Badhwar, a former Chairman of the Railway Board, was appointed to conduct a comprehensive enquiry and to make recommendations for the improvement of Customs organisation and procedure. In response to an invitation issued by the Secretary of the Committee to commercial and trading interests the Association in May submitted a note on various aspects of Customs procedure which appeared to be defective in relation to the requirements of the Tea Industry and Trade. The Committee later issued a comprehensive Questionnaire to Chambers of Commerce and Trade Associations to which a detailed reply was sent by the Calcutta Tea Traders Association. As this reply covered the position of members of the Association satisfactorily no separate reply was made to the Committee's Questionnaire. The Committee are expected to take oral evidence when the written replies have been processed and the Association will no doubt have a further opportunity to express its views.

**Export Duty on Tea.**— During the year under review export duty continued to be levied on tea under the slab system introduced in 1955. When the Decimal Coinage System came into force on the 1st April, 1957 the Government of India converted the rates of duty into their exact equivalents in the new coinage but on the 15th May, 1957 they amended the second Schedule to the Indian Tariff Act by means of the Finance (No. 2) Bill 1957 and revised the slabs, which came into force on the 16th May, as follows :—

“When the price of tea :—

- |   |                           |
|---|---------------------------|
| (i) does not exceed Rs. 2.50<br>per lb.                                   | ... 25 naye paise per lb. |
| (ii) exceeds Rs. 2.50 per lb.<br>but does not exceed Rs. 3.25<br>per lb.  | ... 38 naya paise per lb. |
| (iii) exceeds Rs. 3.25 per lb.<br>but does not exceed<br>Rs. 4.00 per lb. | ... 50 naye paise per lb. |

- (iv) exceeds Rs. 4.00 per lb.  
but does not exceed  
Rs. 4.75 per lb. ... 63 naye paise per lb.
- (v) exceeds Rs. 4.75 per lb. ... 75 naye paise per lb."

By a notification No. 111 dated the 16th May, however, Government exempted tea from the payment of duty in excess of 38 naye paise when the price of tea falls in the slab Rs. 3.25 to Rs. 4.00. This exemption was granted to keep in force the previous concession under which duty was collected at 6 as. a lb. although the price of tea was in the 8 as. slab.

The prices and the rates of duty fixed by Government from month to month during 1957 were as follows:—

Month	Average London price during preceding month	Duty levied on basis of Col 2.
	Rs. a. p.	Rs. a. p.
January 1957	... 4 3 0	0 8 0
February 1957	... 3 15 0	0 6 0
March 1957	... 3 6 1	0 6 0
	Rs. nP.	nP.
April 1957	... 2.74	37.5
May 1957	... 2.41	25
June 1957	... 2.47	25
July 1957	... 2.43	25
August 1957	... 2.55	38
September 1957	... 2.74	38
October 1957	... 3.48	38
November 1957	... 3.30	38
December 1957	3.35	38

In last year's report it was recorded that the Association was considering the submission of further representations to Government with a view to altering the present basis of calculating export duty on tea. Some of the Indian sister Associations, who were consulted, favoured a system of an *ad valorem* duty but, for a variety of reasons, the Association was unable to accept the proposal: it ignored the position of high cost gardens such as those in Darjeeling; it would involve exceed-

ingly difficult problems of identifying teas ; it would be open to much abuse and evasion ; and, in brief, it was likely to prove hopelessly unworkable in practice. In any case the Government of India in reply to a representation submitted by the Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry had observed that any *ad valorem* duty which will ensure adjustment with fluctuations in prices has to be ruled out as "administratively impossible." Towards the end of the year, however, the position of common teas again caused the Indian Producer Associations to agitate the question of revising the basis for levying Export Duty. Once again the suggestion of an *ad valorem* duty was made, with the alternative that the duty should vary with the district of origin of the teas. The Association was unable to support either of the suggestions and efforts are still being made to devise a scheme which will give a measure of relief to common teas.

**Land Customs Formalities.**— During the year the Land Customs authorities issued various notifications simplifying the procedure for the movement of goods from one part of India to another via. Pakistan. Of these instructions two were of special interest to tea companies. The Shillong Collector of Land Customs ruled that it was not necessary for a Bank to act as Guarantor for the agreement required when sending tea in transit through Pakistan to Calcutta and that an Agency House could act in this capacity provided that the consigning tea garden was registered as a separate company from the Agency House concerned. The Collector also agreed that guarantors and sureties who resided in the interior could sign their guarantees in the presence of a Central Excise Officer not below the rank of Inspector who would act as witness and it would not be necessary for them to appear before the Superintendents of Central Excise.

**Labour Bonus : Income Tax Assessments.**— In last year's report it was recorded that the Central Board of Revenue had agreed to allow the bonus for the years 1953 and 1954 to be deducted in Tea Company accounts as a charge against 1955 profits, the bonus for 1955 and 1956 to be deducted from 1956

profits, and subsequent bonuses, if payable, to be charged in respect of the years in which they were actually paid. The Board also ruled that the bonus for 1957 could be taken into the assessment for 1958-59 provided that the amount had been actually disbursed before the assessment was taken up and that the same procedure would apply to subsequent years.

On examining this latter ruling it appeared that the proviso that the bonus should have actually been disbursed before the assessment could be taken up would give rise to the following problems for Tea Companies:

- (1) Difficulties would arise in the computation of deposits and of dividends to be declared in the case of companies which were subject to Section 23A of the Indian Income Tax Act as a result of the uncertainty in regard to the allowance of bonus in assessments.
- (2) In the case of sterling companies the Taxation authorities in the United Kingdom had agreed to a provision for bonus being made in the accounts and it was not necessary for the amount to have been actually disbursed. A different arrangement in India would of course lead to complications.

The matter was accordingly taken up with the Central Board of Revenue, who stated that they had no objection to the anticipated liability on account of bonus for 1957 being debited to the accounts for 1957 and considered in the assessment for 1958-59, provided that the companies undertook in writing to accept the necessary adjustment in the assessment of the subsequent year when the actual payment had been made, the same procedure being applicable to subsequent years.

**Income Tax Allowances (Current Profits Deposit) Rules, 1957. —**

During the year, at the request of a member, the Association asked the Central Board of Revenue to clarify the position of sterling tea companies under the terms of the Income Tax Allowances (Current Profits Deposit) Rules, 1957 as there appeared to be some doubt as to whether these Companies

would for the purposes of computing their current profits deposits be treated as falling under Rule 3 or Rule 4 of the Rules. The Taxation Sub-Committee were of the view that Sterling Tea Companies would not come within the scope of Rule 3 of the Rules because, although they are incorporated in the United Kingdom, their profits are remitted to the United Kingdom and their dividends are declared in the United Kingdom, they are, under the terms of Section 4A(c) of the Indian Income Tax Act 1922, treated for income tax purposes as "resident and ordinarily resident" in India. On the other hand the fact that 60% of their income is exempt from income tax as being agricultural income would bring them under the scope of Rule 4, which seemed to have been framed to meet the position of such companies. The Central Board of Revenue confirmed that the Taxation Sub-Committee's view was correct and that Sterling Companies would be treated as coming under Rule 4 of the Rules for the purposes of computing their current profits deposits.

**Central Sales Tax Act, 1956.**— The Central Sales Tax Act, 1956, which provides for the levy of sales tax on sales effected in the course of inter-State trade or commerce, received the assent of the President on the 21st December 1956 and was brought into force with the exception of Section 15 on the 5th January 1957. Liability to tax, however, commenced on the 1st July 1957 which was the date fixed by the Government of India under Section 6 from which dealers would have to pay the tax. Section 15 of the Act is due to come into force on the 1st April 1958.

Tea gardens in Assam generally purchase their stores etc from Calcutta and they were naturally eager to register as dealers under the Central Sales Tax Act so as to be able to benefit from the 1% rate fixed for inter-State transactions between dealers. The Assam Sales Tax Authorities, who are responsible for the registration of dealers in Assam under the Central Sales Tax Act, laid it down that tea gardens would only be eligible for registration if

(a) they carried out inter-State transactions, or

(b) they were registered under the Assam Sales Tax Act.

Most gardens in Assam are not registered under the Assam Sales Tax Act because under this Act registration is only granted if sales in the State exceed Rs. 12,000/- per annum.

There was some doubt as to whether the despatch of tea from Assam for sale in Calcutta (West Bengal) would constitute an inter-State transaction within the meaning of the Act. Solicitors in Assam held the view that tea estates in Assam would be eligible for registration under the Act because "they for valuable consideration cause goods to move from one Province to another". The Commissioner of Commercial Taxes, Assam, however, refused to accept this view because in his opinion "tea estates do not sell their teas to anyone outside Assam but they simply consign their manufactured goods to their principals in Calcutta or elsewhere and the actual sales take place only at such places outside the State of Assam." Legal opinion obtained in Calcutta supported the Commissioner's view that teas sent to Calcutta for auction were only stock transfers and the Association agreed that tea estates would not be able to claim registration as dealers under the Central Sales Tax Act on these grounds.

**The Assam Taxation (on Goods carried by Roads and Inland Waterways) Act 1954.** — In July the Assam Taxation (on goods carried by Roads and Inland Waterways) Act was amended and the rate of the carriage tax on tea was changed from one anna to seven naye paise per pound. The new rate was brought into force on the 1st October 1957.

No progress was made during the year in connection with the Association's appeal to the Supreme Court challenging the validity of the Act on constitutional grounds and the appeal still remains pending before the Court.

As recorded in last year's report members of the Association in the Dooars, who had been assessed to tax in respect of tea shipped *via* Dhubri, were advised to appeal against these assessments so as to prevent any recovery proceedings being taken against them. A model form of appeal and a model



revision petition, which had been prepared in consultation with the Association solicitors, were circulated to members for their use and it was explained that an appeal had to be filed within thirty days from the date of service of the Order of Assessment and a revision petition within 90 days from the date of service of the order of assessment. Members were urged to ensure that they took appropriate action within the time limits laid down so as to save themselves the inconvenience which would arise from appeals to the High Court or the Supreme Court, which would become necessary in the event of the limits being exceeded.

**Assam Agricultural Income-Tax.**—The rates of agricultural income tax for 1957, which were fixed under the Assam Finance Ordinance, 1957 and later under the Assam Finance Act, 1957, were as follows:—

31 naye paise in the rupee where the total income does not exceed Rs. 1 lakh;

38 naye paise in the rupee where the total income exceeds Rs. 1 lakh;

Provided that (i) no tax is payable where the agricultural income does not exceed Rs. 3,000.

(ii) the tax payable should not exceed half the amount by which the agricultural income exceeds Rs. 3,000.

**Assam Chaplaincy Scheme.** During the year under review no changes were made in the organisational arrangements of the Assam Chaplaincy Scheme which maintains four Chaplains as follows:—

At Tezpur	Rev. F. Wyld
At Digboi	Rev. P. Innes
At Cinnamara	Rev. J. Nelson
At Chalkoa	Rev. L. N. Meredith

As a result of the introduction of the new terms of service for Chaplains it was again necessary to increase the rate of contributions by Tea Companies from Rs. 45/15/6 per 100 acres to Rs. 50/- per 100 acres.

**Assam Nursing Association.**— The Assam Nursing Association continued to function satisfactorily during the year under review, the rate of contribution from Tea Companies being maintained at Rs. 8 per 100 acres under Tea.

**B. C. G. Vaccination.**— No progress was made during the year under review in resustituting the Association's B.C.G. Vaccination campaign owing to a lack of suitably trained staff and the work in this connection continued to be limited as in 1956 to the areas supervised by the Chief Medical Officers of the Bhatpara Central Hospital in the Dooars, the Labac Central Hospital in Cachar and the Terai Medical Association in the Terai District.

**Ross Institute of Tropical Hygiene, India Branch.**— Tea Companies in the membership of the Association continued to support the Ross Institute of Tropical Hygiene, India Branch during the year under review and subscribed to the Institute at the rate of five annas per acre for the year 1957/58.

The Institute organised two refresher courses for Assistant Medical Officers during 1957, one being held from the 14th to the 18th October, 1957 at Cinnamara in Assam and the other from the 15th to 17th January, 1958 at Hasimara in the Dooars. Both courses were well attended by Assistant Medical Officers from member estates.

**Calcutta School of Tropical Medicine.**— As in 1956 members of the Association were asked to contribute during the year to the Endowment Fund of the Calcutta School of Tropical Medicine at the rate of three naye paise per acre.

The total collection made on this account amounted to Rs. 10,727/52 and this sum was paid over to the School.

The two courses for the Licence and the Diploma were held as usual during the year, commencing respectively on the 15th July and 15th October, 1957 and the former was attended by a number of Assistant Medical Officers from member estates.

**Planters Amenities Fund.**— During the year most Tea Companies contributed to the Planters Amenities Fund at the rate

of four annas an acre as against the previous rate of one anna per acre.

This increase in the rate of contribution was recommended in order to provide additional funds for expanded proposals which had been put forward by the Branches for encouraging outdoor activities and sports, which it was the object of the Fund to promote.

**Cemeteries in the Tea Districts.**— Agency Houses with interests in Darjeeling and in the Terai were asked to subscribe towards the Darjeeling Cemeteries Fund for the year 1957/58 at the rate of Rs. 30/- for each garden, while those with interests in Cachar contributed towards the Christian Cemetery at Silchar at the rate of Rs. 20/- per garden in respect of all gardens in that district, except those in the Longai Valley.

**Bishop Hubback Memorial Fund.**— Towards the close of 1956 the Bishop of Assam launched an appeal for contributions to a fund to commemorate the memory of Bishop Hubback, who had died in 1955 after serving for more than 20 years in the diocese of Assam. The target for the fund was Rs. 30,000/- and it was proposed that it should be spent in replacing in part the Diocesan property at Dibrugarh which had been lost as a result of erosion by the Brahmaputra in 1954. As the cause was considered worthy of support a sum of Rs. 15,000/- was donated by the Association to the fund on behalf of members.

**Sale of Tea Waste for the Manufacture of Caffeine.**— As in the past, the Association continued to recommend that tea gardens should not sell tea waste for any purpose whatsoever but should destroy all stocks on the garden.

In April, however, the Tea Board informed the Association that three Caffeine manufacturing firms in Calcutta were finding it difficult to obtain supplies of tea waste and asked whether members could arrange to make supplies available. The total quantity required by these firms was said to be about 9½ lakh lbs., which was considerably in excess of the quantities previously supplied by members at the special request of the Tea Board. When the Board confirmed that the requirements

were genuine the Association with some reluctance selected three Agency Houses by ballot to supply the quantities required. At the time of writing negotiations regarding price are still proceeding between the Agency Houses and the chemical firms.

**Rate of Emigrant Labour Cess.**— The Government of India, Ministry of Labour, fixed the rate of Emigrant Labour Cess for the year 1st October, 1957 to 30th September, 1958 at rupees five per assisted emigrant.

**Finance.**— Copies of the audited balance sheets of the Association and the Scientific Department as at the 31st December, 1957, together with the revenue accounts for the year, are attached to this report.

C. D. WILSON, *Chairman*  
L. T. CARMICHAEL, *Vice-Chairman*  
D. L. BETTS  
N. S. COLDWELL  
SIR RICHARD DUCKWORTH  
G. KYDD  
H. MACKAY TALLACK  
I. F. MORRISS  
G. F. OLDHAM  
J. SADDLER  
H. K. STRINGFELLOW  
P. H. WILLIAMSON

W. M. PARIS,  
*Assistant Secretary,*

ROYAL EXCHANGE,  
Calcutta, 25th February, 1958.

# REPORT OF THE DARJEELING AND DOOARS SUB-COMMITTEE

**The Darjeeling and Dooars Sub-Committee.**— The following gentlemen served as members of the Darjeeling and Dooars Sub-Committee for 1957 :

Mr. G. Kydd, <i>Chairman</i>	Messrs. Octavius Steel & Co., Ltd.
Mr. J. P. H. Bent ,, I. F. Morriss, O.B.E.	} Messrs. Jardine Henderson Ltd.
Mr. G. C. Carlton	Messrs. Davenport & Co. Private Ltd.
Mr. N. S. Coldwell, M.C. ,, A. N. Sircar	} Messrs. James Finlay & Co. Ltd.
Mr. L. T. Carmichael	Messrs. Duncan Brothers & Co., Ltd.
Mr. P. Fraser-Casey ,, B. P. Bajoria	} Messrs. McLeod & Co., Ltd.
Mr. G. F. Oldham	Messrs. Andrew Yule & Co., Ltd.
Mr. H. K. Stringfellow	Messrs. Shaw Wallace & Co., Ltd.
,, G. A. Whitaker	Messrs. Gillanders Arbuthnot & Co., Ltd.
Mr. P. H. Williamson, M.C. ,, P. B. Nicholls	} Messrs. Williamson Magor & Co., Ltd.

## **Minimum Wages Advisory Committee for the Dooars & Terai.**—

It was recorded in last year's report that in this Minimum Wages Advisory Committee disagreement arose between employers and labour as to the interpretation to be placed on the collated replies of gardens to a questionnaire circulated by the Committee and that it had been agreed that the Chairman of the Committee would study the replies further and issue a considered report and recommendations, the employers agreeing in the meantime to continue to make the additional payment of -/3/- per day which had been in force throughout 1956. In

October 1957 a draft report prepared by the Chairman was circulated to the Advisory Committee, which met at Calcutta on 28th and 29th October and was attended on the Association's behalf by Messrs. Standing, Kydd, Carmichael and Crombie. The Chairman's principal recommendation was that the minimum daily wage should be increased by -/1/-, but this met with strong opposition from both labour and employers—from labour on the ground that it was too little and from employers on the ground that it was too much. The Association's representatives went further and urged that, with the increase in the employer's liability as a result of the introduction of the Employees' Provident Fund Scheme, the -/3/- per day additional should be abolished and in place of it the minimum wage should be increased by -/1/6 so as to compensate labour for the provident fund deductions from their wages. In the absence of agreement, the Chairman asked that both sides should submit written statements of their respective cases by the end of November and that the subject should then be reconsidered. The Association accordingly filed a statement describing its view-point on 30th November and a further meeting of the Advisory Committee is now awaited.

**Minimum Wages Advisory Committee for Darjeeling.**—The first meeting of this Advisory Committee was held in Darjeeling on the 8th and 9th November, and was attended on the Association's behalf by Sir Richard Duckworth, Mr. A. N. Banerjee and Lt. Col. E. S. E. Rerrie. The Committee commenced its operations in the same way as the Advisory Committee for the Dooars and Terai, namely, by drafting a questionnaire—for circulation to all gardens and managing agencies—calling for statistics regarding population and employment, wages and amenities, the financial position of companies etc. The precise form of the questionnaire was debated at the meeting and eventually followed very closely that used in the Dooars. At the same time the Labour representatives demanded the immediate grant of an increase of  $1\frac{1}{2}$  annas in the daily wage, a demand which the employers were able successfully to resist on the ground that a decision must await the collection and collation of replies to the questionnaire. The circulation of these replies is now awaited.

**Payment of Cloth Compensation to employees on Darjeeling**

**Gardens.**— The Appellate Tribunal, as recorded in last year's report, having held that the Association's members were required to pay cloth compensation in respect of the year 1953, the Association submitted a review petition urging that this bonus had now been superseded by the Delhi Agreement on Bonus, and also asking for a clarification of what the Appellate Tribunal meant by its statement that "cloth bonus has come to stay as a condition of service till the real value of wages be what it was in pre-war days". Judgment on the review petition was delivered early in 1957 and, apart from dismissing the Association's plea that the cloth bonus had been superseded by the Delhi Agreement, the Appellate Tribunal stated that the meaning of the ambiguous phrase was that cloth bonus had to be paid until the real value of wages again reached the 1942 level. On examination of wage and cost of living statistics, the Association came to the conclusion that the 1942 level of wages had already been attained in 1953 and that there were therefore no grounds for the payment of the cloth bonus in respect of that year. This interpretation however was not accepted by the Unions and there followed prolonged negotiations in the course of which the Labour Commissioner was asked to give his opinion on the dispute. Ultimately, after very long delays, the Labour Commissioner supported the Unions and held that the bonus for 1953 should be paid, and the Association decided to acquiesce in this opinion. Unfortunately, as a result of the delay and of strong agitation by the Unions, the Government of West Bengal were apparently considering a fresh reference to a Tribunal and, although the Association's Darjeeling Branch issued a circular on the 21st November recommending the payment of the 1953 bonus, a reference to a Tribunal was gazetted on 10th December. The Association protested strongly against this reference and, as in the meantime member gardens had either paid or were in the process of paying, urged that no dispute in fact existed. Nevertheless steps were taken to proceed with the case and arrangements have been made for the gardens to file statements with the Tribunal to the effect that payment has been made and therefore no dispute exists. Further developments are awaited.

**Pay and Allowances for Subordinate Staff in the Dooars.—**

Since the scales of pay and allowances for subordinate staff in the Dooars had been fixed in 1955 the Branch had made minor adjustments to them for certain categories of staff in order to remove anomalies which had appeared in applying the scales. With the Association's approval the Branch re-issued the scales as amended and a copy of the revised scales will be found in the appendices to this report.

**Issue of Firewood to Labour in the Dooars.—** In last year's report it was recorded that the Dooars Branch had recommended that monthly rated workers should be supplied with 25 maunds of firewood per household per year and daily rated workers with 12½ maunds per household. In the past it had been customary to issue firewood in terms of peels and it was found that the conversion to a maundage basis had resulted in the case of some monthly paid workers in a reduction in issues.

The West Bengal Cha Sramik Union also submitted a demand for an increase in the quantity of firewood given to daily paid workers. After consultation with all concerned the Branch recommended that with effect from the 1st January, 1958 firewood should be issued as follows :—

Category	Grades	Per Household Annually
Subordinate staff	A & B	4 peels
Monthly paid workers	C 2-4 : D 2-4 and E 2	4 „
Monthly paid workers	C 1(b), D 1 and E 1	3 „
Monthly paid workers	F 1 and 2	2 „
Daily rated workers	All (including C 1 (a) and G 1-5)	2 „

The foregoing scale was accepted subject to the condition, *inter alia*, that the firewood supplied might be of any type available and might include uprooted tea bushes, shade trees and wood from other local sources.

**West Bengal Estates Acquisition Act, 1953.—** During 1957 estates in West Bengal continued to suffer anxiety as to the possible outcome of proceedings under the West Bengal Estates Acquisition Act. The application of this Act to tea plantations was described in last year's report, as was the appointment of



a Committee which would examine land utilisation on each estate and make recommendations as to how much land the estate would have to retain for its economic operation. The procedure followed by this Committee, on which the Association is represented by the Deputy Chairman, is to meet periodically in the tea districts and to interview representatives of individual gardens, equipped with their maps and land records, and debate the garden's claim for the retention of its existing property. During 1957, the Committee held a session in the Dooars from 14th to 16th February, another in Darjeeling from 25th to 27th April, and a third in Darjeeling and the Terai from 25th to 29th November.

In determining gardens' land requirements and the areas which should be recommended for resumption by Government, the Committee generally followed the principles which had been accepted at its first meeting in 1956 and which were described in last year's report. An important further principle which was clarified during 1957 was that, although tea plantations were covered by the Act and the Committee was conducting enquiries into their situation, no land in their ownership had as yet actually been vested in Government. In the light of this principle, the Association advised members in West Bengal that, irrespective of any recommendations about resumption that might be under contemplation by the Committee, estates should continue to exercise control over all their lands and should not suffer them to fall into neglect, although, in the face of the uncertainty created by the prospect of Government resumption, it would be only wise to refrain from entering into elaborate or expensive schemes for the development of land which might eventually be taken over by Government. Many of the areas which seemed likely to be recommended by the Committee for resumption consisted of jote lands, and others of forests, and during the Committee's sessions useful assurances were given that, if and when these lands were taken over, workers would not be evicted from khetland which they were already cultivating, outsiders would not be brought in for settlement on the land and, in the case of forests, estates would continue (on payment) to enjoy the produce which they at present derived from the land and, where possible, their own workers

would as in the past be used for the extraction of this forest produce.

It is too early yet to foresee what the eventual outcome of the land acquisition proceedings will be. Clearly, the Industry will be deprived of much valuable land; equally clearly, as a result of the Committee's deliberations, the deprivations are unlikely to be as crippling as might once have been expected; but the position must continue to be a source of uncertainty and anxiety.

**Floods and Communications in the Dooars.**—The Dooars Region was again fortunate in 1957 in that there were no floods of any consequence and no new major breaches were caused to either road or rail communications. That the area has not been subject to excessive flooding for three years in succession has perhaps been fortuitous, because a great deal remains to be done to make all communications secure. There are apprehensions in some quarters as to what would happen should there be floods even of normal dimensions such as were experienced in the past. It will be recollected that there were heavy floods in 1948, 1950 and 1952 followed by the catastrophic flood of 1954, during which period the rivers in the Dooars have undergone radical changes, and in many cases have increased in size several-fold. The river beds have risen very considerably between 1948 and 1954, and since 1954, in spite of there having been no unusually heavy spates, the rivers have brought down substantial charges of sediment and there has been a heavy deposition for comparatively short distances from where the rivers debouch from the hills. There is doubt if the waterways would be able to carry the heavy spates of normal flood without damage to existing bridges.

The attention of the authorities concerned has been drawn to the condition of the Lish River. A new road bridge is being constructed below the railway bridge, but the bridge and approach roads were still unfinished at the time of writing this report. Above the railway bridge the river has "bulged" to the east and west, the river bed has risen, and there are logical grounds for apprehending that the Lish river could breach both the railway and the new road alignment at times of high flood.

It is satisfactory that this section of the National Highway No. 31 which has caused anxiety for many years can be considered to be comparatively secure. Elsewhere along National Highway No. 31 the position is unchanged at the Sukhajhora river and the Dem Dima River where there are only temporary bridges which are likely to be destroyed at times of flood and at the Char Toorsa and Sil Toorsa Rivers where no steps have been taken to construct permanent bridges.

Reconstruction of the Dem Dima River bridge is held up because the Government of India has not yet made a decision as to permanent alignment for National Highway No. 31, and it has been learned recently that plans for the construction of a permanent bridge across the Sukhajhora River are not likely to be finalised until the 3rd Five Year Plan. Strong pressure has been brought to bear on the Department concerned to have the plans for both schemes finalised in the immediate future.

It has been pointed out to Government that the longer these schemes are left the more costly will be the project when the work is eventually taken up. Each year sees radical changes in the rivers.

It was reported last year that the Irrigation & Waterways Dept., Government of India had carried out intensive investigations and surveys in the catchment areas of all rivers which traverse the Dooars and that valuable data needed to prepare plans for a long-term solution to the Dooars problem were being collated. At a conference held at the end of January 1958, it was announced that sufficient data had been collated to enable work to be started in the Toorsa River and plans have been finalised to erect embankments at vital points upstream from the railway bridge which will contain the river within its existing bed. The provision of adequate protection in the Toorsa River and the building of permanent bridges across the Char Toorsa and Sil Toorsa Rivers is a complex problem, and model experiments will have to be carried out for several years before plans can be finalised. In the meantime the work will be taken up piece-meal, and the Government of West Bengal proposes to build embankments above the railway bridge to protect the countryside.

*State Highway.*—The approach of Government to the conditions in and around the Upper Jaldacca bridge was negative during 1957, and the Nagrakata District was cut off insofar as road communications were concerned for the whole of the year from early July. It is fortunate that the Railway Authorities made such an excellent job of erecting new bridges across the Jaldacca and providing adequate protection in 1955.

*Railway.*—No firm decision has been made regarding the building of the projected chord line from Ramshai to Binnaguri.

The proposed new alignment of the railway from Domohani to Cooch Behar (or Alipur Duars) is being surveyed. The Association is keeping in touch with the Railway Board, and stress has again been made on the vital need to retain the existing alignment of the Assam Link as a first class line if the new alignment is built.

*Teesta Ferry.*— During the year the Association drew the attention of the West Bengal Government to the very unsatisfactory condition of the boats used by the contractor who runs the Teesta-Abduar Ferry between Karalaghat and Barnesghat at Jalpaiguri, and urged that his contract should not be renewed for the period of the next monsoon unless he obtained new boats.

*Movement of Tea to Calcutta.*— (a) *The Guaranteed Transport Scheme.*—To encourage the use of rail transport for the carriage of tea the North Eastern Railway introduced as from the 15th July, 1957 a Guaranteed Transport Scheme from Siliguri under which they guaranteed to deliver tea to Howrah, Chitpur and the K. P. Docks in not more than seven, seven and nine days respectively on the payment of a Quick Transit Charge of six pies in the rupee of the total freight. The scheme was welcomed by the Industry and in particular by tea gardens in Darjeeling which had been constrained to use the Air Services to send their teas to Calcutta whenever they wished to get them down in a hurry. Unfortunately, however, almost from the very onset restrictions were imposed on bookings to K. P. Docks owing to congestion in the Port and teas had in the main to be booked to Howrah, Chitpur and Sealdah. Nevertheless,

tea gardens took advantage of the scheme, which for some inexplicable reason was discontinued in October, 1957 and only resumed in January, 1958 in respect of bookings to Howrah and Chitpur after representation to the North Eastern Railway authorities. Unfortunately, bookings to the K. P. Docks are still closed but the railways have been asked to make a special effort to resume bookings before the tea season begins in March, 1958. The Chairman of the Tea Board has also been asked to request the railway authorities to extend the scheme to the Dooars if possible and to stations on the Darjeeling Himalayan Railway.

(b) *The Indo-Pakistan route.*— From about the middle of 1956 the Association has been pressing the railway authorities through the Tea Board to allow the movement of tea via Haldibari and Santahar and at the end of the year the Tea Board informed the Association that the Director, Rail Movements, had stated that he had no objections to tea being despatched via Pakistan upto a limited quota.

Throughout 1957, however, tea gardens were unable to send their teas by this route because local station masters in the Dooars were not willing to accept bookings of this nature, owing it is understood to the fact that the Pakistan railways were not prepared to allow such traffic.

**Carriage of Tea and Tea Garden Stores on the Darjeeling Hill Cart Road.**— In last year's report it was recorded that the Government of West Bengal had issued a notification in August prohibiting the carriage of tea and tea garden stores by public carriers and restricting severely their carriage by private carriers on the Darjeeling Hill Cart road between Sukna and Ghum, with the object of protecting the Darjeeling Himalayan Railway which had been working at a loss for many years, but that as a result of representations by the Association they had not in fact enforced the restrictions.

In January, 1957, however, the Government of West Bengal issued a draft of another notification which, while superseding that of August, 1956, was exactly similar to it except that the prohibition on the carriage of tea and tea garden

stores by public carriers was removed. Later the Government of West Bengal convened a Conference on the 20th March with representatives of the Railway Ministry to which the Association's representatives were invited. At this Conference the Government representatives explained the reasons for imposing restrictions on the carriage of tea etc. by road and the Association's representatives explained the inconvenience that would be suffered by tea gardens if such restrictions were enforced. Gardens in Darjeeling were marginal and yet owing to the difficulties of rail transport they had to send their teas down to Calcutta by air which necessitated their movement by road to the airfield. The Darjeeling Railway, moreover, had not been able for various reasons to accept the traffic offered and bookings had been closed for very long periods at a time. While Government's objects were appreciated the Association was certain that it was not their intention to handicap an industry which contributed so much to the country's exchequer by imposing restrictions on the free movement of tea to market. At the end of the Conference the Industry's difficulties appeared to have been appreciated and the railway authorities gave an assurance that they would endeavour to introduce a fast parcel service to Calcutta for the carriage of tea. This service was in fact introduced and reference to it is made in another part of the report.

In August the Government of West Bengal reissued the draft notification which had been published earlier in the year, with the exception that they increased the number of public carriers which could use the Darjeeling Hill Cart road from 31 to 32, but up to the time of writing the final notification does not appear to have been issued.

**Maintenance of Local Board Roads.**— The unsatisfactory condition of local Board roads in the tea districts had been the subject of a recommendation by the Plantations Enquiry Commission and the Association had provided the Government of India with a list of roads which were in urgent need of repairs. During the year under review the Association at the request of the Dooars Branch drew the special attention of the Government of India to the condition of the Kalchini-Panabusti-Jaigaon

road, which had reached such a state of disrepair that cars and lorries used the verge rather than the actual road surface.

The Government of India passed on the Association's representation to the State Government for attention but no action has so far been taken by the West Bengal Government to improve the condition of the road. It is hoped however that this road and other roads in the tea districts of North Bengal will receive attention in the near future in view of the assurance given by the Chief Minister that the extra money collected as a result of the increase in the rate of West Bengal Agricultural Income tax will be used in improving road communications in the tea districts.

**West Bengal Agricultural Income Tax.**— (a) *Amendment to the Act.*—Towards the end of November, 1957 the Government of West Bengal introduced a Bill in the Assembly to amend the Bengal Agricultural Income Tax Act, 1944 with a view to increasing the rates of tax payable by agricultural companies from 4 annas to 40 naye paise in the rupee. Government's proposal to increase the rates of agricultural income tax was received with some dismay because it was felt that the increase would add to production costs at a time when the industry's main problem was to export tea at competitive prices. The industry's difficulties were therefore explained to the Chief Minister of West Bengal when a representative of the Indian Tea Planters Association and the Deputy Chairman waited on him on the 6th December. The Chief Minister stated that the increase in tax was unavoidable because the State was in desperate need of funds to carry out the Second Five-Year Plan, but he promised to examine whether it would not be possible to spend the extra money collected in the tea districts, perhaps on the improvement of roads. For this purpose he asked the Association to let him have a note indicating the projects which were considered worthy of urgent attention. This note was supplied to the Chief Minister and Government's reactions are now awaited. The Amendment Act received the assent of the Governor on the 13th January, 1958 but the State Government has not yet notified a date from which the new rates of tax will come into force.

(b) *Test Case.*—In the Association's report for 1952 it was recorded that the Association had appealed to the Calcutta High Court against the Appellate Tribunal's decision that agricultural produce such as bamboos, thatch etc. used by the company was liable to taxation and that the Agricultural Income Tax Department had appealed against the decision of the Tribunal in which it was ruled that khet land produce could not be considered to be agricultural income. At the end of 1955 the High Court gave a ruling on the Income Tax Department's appeal supporting the Association's contention that khet land produce could not be considered to be agricultural income. Judgment on the Association's appeal was given on the 10th September, 1957, when the High Court ruled that bamboo, thatch, fuel etc. grown by a tea company and utilised for its own benefit in its tea business was agricultural income within the meaning of the Bengal Agricultural Income Tax Act.

A certified copy of this latter judgment has since been received and it is proposed to appeal against it to the Supreme Court if leave to appeal is granted by the High Court.

At the meeting held on the 6th December 1957 referred to earlier, the Chief Minister had advised the Association's representatives that despite the High Court Judgment it was not Government's intention to levy tax on fuel, thatch, bamboos etc. which were used by an estate for its own needs and that only such quantities of the produce as were sold would be treated as agricultural income. Government has been asked to issue its orders on this point as soon as possible.

**Air Services in the Dooars.**— The various air-fields in the Dooars continued to function successfully under the control of their local airfield Committees, and the aircraft operated by the Dooars Branch provided a valuable service throughout the year.

As in the past Messrs. Jamair Co. Private Ltd. were retained to provide air services between Calcutta and the Dooars and the Dooars' gardens agreed to ship 2½% of their crops as backloads by that Company. The Sub-Committee wish to record their appreciation of Jamair's services during the year.



**Postal Services in the Dooars.**— Mail intended for the Newlands Post Office, which serves the Newlands, Kumargram and Sankos Tea Estates is routed via Alipurduar Junction and has to cross the Rydak River. During the monsoons, when the river is in spate, the service is often interrupted for several days at a time because the mail cannot be taken across the river and is detained at Hatipotha P.O. The Postmaster General, West Bengal Circle, was therefore asked to arrange for the mails to be sent via Jorai Station which would ensure their regular and quicker delivery.

The Postmaster General, however, advised the Association that he could not arrange for mail for Newlands P.O. to be sent via Jorai Station because the Kumargram Jorai District Board Road, over which they would have to be carried by the contractor's bus, was in an unsuitable condition and the Regional Transport Authority was unwilling to grant a permit for the bus to use the road.

In August, 1957 the Dooars Branch informed the Association that the soling and shingling of the road from Jorai to Kumargram had been completed as also the decking of the Kulkulia Bridge and that the road was now motorable in all weathers. In view of these advices the Postmaster General was once again asked to send the mail via Jorai Station and it is understood that he is still endeavouring to obtain a permit from the Regional Transport Authority for the contractor's bus to use the Jorai Kumargram Road.

**Telephone Communications in West Bengal.**— Comparatively slow progress was made in 1957 in the installation of telephones in the Dooars and only one exchange was opened at Nagrakata on the 22nd August. The exchange building at Hasimara was completed in March, 1957 but owing to a lack of some major items of stores it was not possible to put the exchange into operation. As a result the Hasimara and Kalchini areas are still dependent on the Public call office telephones in those areas.

**Diesel Oil.**— As one of the measures to increase its resources for financing the Second Five Year Plan the Government of

West Bengal introduced a Bill in November, 1957 to amend the Bengal Motor Spirit Sales Tax Act which would bring diesel oil within the definition of motor spirits and make it subject to sales tax at half the rate fixed for other motor spirits. The Bill also provided for an increase in the rate of sales tax on motor spirits from 6 annas to 40 nP per gallon.

Although this increase in costs was regretted the Association considered that no useful purpose would be served by protesting against the Bill as Government's need for finance was only too well known.

**Dooars & Darjeeling Nursing Home.**— The Dooars and Darjeeling Nursing Home continued to function during 1957 and Tea Companies contributed towards its maintenance at the following rates :—

For gardens in Darjeeling and Terai ...	Rs. 1/-	per acre
For gardens in the Dooars excluding those in Eastern Dooars ...	12 as.	per acre
For gardens in the Eastern Dooars ...	11 as.	per acre
Special Health Service Scheme	Rs. 1/8/-	per acre

The slight increases in the rates over those applicable in 1956 were made to enable the Nursing Home to balance its Budget for 1957.

Towards the close of year, however, several Agency Houses indicated their unwillingness to support the Nursing Home on the grounds that their staff preferred to come to Calcutta for treatment and that the use being made of the Nursing Home did not justify the contribution which they had been making so far. This decision was received with regret, particularly by members in Darjeeling who had found the Nursing Home a most useful organisation. Efforts were therefore made to devise a new basis of subscriptions which might enable the resigning gardens to continue their membership. After much consider-

ation by the Darjeeling and Dooars Sub-Committee it was decided that subscriptions in 1958 should be levied as follows :—

For gardens in Darjeeling	...	Rs. 1/50 per acre
For gardens in Terai	...	,, 1/25 ,, ,,
For gardens in the Dooars excluding Eastern Dooars	...	,, 0/60 ,, ,,
For gardens in the Eastern Dooars	,,	0/40 ,, ,,
Special Health Service Scheme	...	,, 1/50 ,, ,,

Despite these reductions in the rates of subscription to the Nursing Home for Dooars gardens the Tea Companies, which had previously indicated their wish to resign, were unable to withdraw their resignations. It is hoped, however, that with increased contributions from the Darjeeling Schools, the remaining subscribers will be able to support the Nursing Home and to keep it in being at least until the proposed new Nursing Home in Calcutta is constructed.

Dr. A. T. Bromley, the Superintendent of the Nursing Home resigned his appointment in December, 1957 and his place was taken by Dr. Mrs. M. A. Patterson, M.B., Ch.B., F.R.C.S.E.

**Jalpaiguri Hospital: New X-Ray Apparatus.**— The new X-Ray apparatus, which as recorded in last year's report had been purchased with the help of a grant from the Sardar Vallabhai Patel Memorial Fund, was repaired and brought into use at the Jalpaiguri Hospital at the end of December, 1957.

**Nurses Training Scheme in the Dooars.**— The Scheme for training nurses at the Jalpaiguri Hospital, which was referred to in last year's report, was the subject of discussion between representatives of the Government of West Bengal, the Indian Tea Planters Association and the Indian Tea Association at a Conference convened by Government and held on the 5th July, 1957. At this Conference it was once again made clear that the tea industry could not accept any financial commitment

in connection with the training of nurses and that it was the duty of Government to provide adequate facilities for the training of such personnel, if tea gardens were to be expected to fulfil their obligations under the Plantations Labour Rules. Statistics collected from members indicated that the standards reached generally exceeded those laid down under the Rules but that some gardens were short because they were unable to find suitably trained personnel. Government therefore asked the Producer Associations to let them have details of the number of medical personnel employed on tea gardens, showing the qualifications held by them and to make an estimate of the probable numbers which would be required annually as replacements. Information of this nature was collected in respect of the members of the Dooars Branch and forwarded to Government, whose further proposals are now awaited.

**Training of Dhais at Darjeeling.**— The courses organised by the Deshbandu Maternity and Child Welfare Centre at Darjeeling for the training of Dais continued to be held in 1957 and a large number of tea garden nominees were admitted to the Courses.

Under the Plantations Labour Rules tea gardens are required to employ trained dais but it was not certain whether the certificates issued by the Deshbandu Centre would be accepted by the various State Governments concerned. The Tea Board accordingly took this matter up with the State Governments and were able to obtain agreement that persons holding these certificates would be recognised as trained dais in all the States in which tea plantations existed.

**Drug Licences.**— As the Director of Health Services Assam had exempted tea garden dispensaries in Assam from the necessity of taking out licences under the Assam Drug Rules, 1945 a representation was made to the Director of Health Services West Bengal for a similar concession in respect of tea gardens in West Bengal. Up to the time of writing no reply had been received to this representation.

**Darjeeling Chaplaincy Fund.**— During the year under review Agency House gardens in the Darjeeling District contri-

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buted as in previous years at the rate of 3 as. 9 ps. per acre to the Darjeeling Chaplaincy Fund for the maintenance of a Chaplain in that area. The total sum collected at this rate amounted to Rs. 4557/86 and this amount was paid to the Bishop of Barrackpore under whose jurisdiction Darjeeling falls.

G. KYDD,  
*Chairman*  
Darjeeling & Dooars  
Sub-Committee.

Royal Exchange,  
*Calcutta, 28th February, 1938.*

REPORT OF THE SCIENTIFIC DEPARTMENT  
SUB-COMMITTEE FOR THE YEAR ENDING  
31ST DECEMBER, 1957.

The following persons served as members of the Scientific Department Sub-Committee during 1957:

Mr. N. S. Coldwell ( <i>Chairman</i> )	}	Messrs. James Finlay & Co.,
„ A. N. Sircar	...	Ltd.
„ P. B. Nicholls ( <i>Vice-Chairman</i> )	„	Williamson Magor & Co., Ltd.
„ E. H. Adams	...	„ Jardine Henderson Ltd.
„ D. L. Betts	...	}
„ G. A. Whitaker	...	„ Gillanders Arbuthnot & Co., Ltd.
„ A. K. J. Henderson	...	„ James Warren & Co., Ltd.
„ G. Kydd	...	„ Octavius Steel & Co., Ltd.
„ G. F. Oldham	...	„ Andrew Yule & Co., Ltd.
„ J. Saddler, M.B.F.	...	}
„ R. J. L. Oakley	...	„ Kilbura & Co. Private Ltd.
„ H. K. Stringfellow	...	„ Shaw Wallace & Co., Ltd.
„ C. D. Wilson	...	„ Balmer Lawrie & Co., Ltd.

Mr. Coldwell went on leave for four months in July and during his absence Mr. Nicholls acted as Chairman of the Sub-Committee.

**Organisation of the Tocklai Experimental Station.**—At the end of the year under review the senior staff at the Experimental Station consisted of:—

*Tocklai Establishment*—

Director                      ...                      Mr. H. Ferguson

Scientific Officer (Head-quarters) ...	Mr. A. D. Swan
Maintenance Engineer ...	.. N. C. Barooah

*Botanical Branch—*

Senior Botanist and Plant Physiologist ...	Dr. W. Wight
Plant Physiologist ...	.. D. N. Barua
Selection Officer ...	Mr. M. J. Green
Assistant Plant Breeding Officer ...	.. P. K. Barua

*Agricultural Branch—*

Agriculturist ...	Mr. S. K. Dutta
Assistant Agriculturist ...	.. S. K. Basu
Agronomist ...	.. K. N. Sharma

*Soil Chemistry—*

Physical Chemist ...	Mr. N. G. Gokhale
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*Tea Chemistry & Technology—*

Biochemist ...	Mr. D. J. Wood
Assistant Biochemist ...	Dr. N. B. Chanda
Tea Taster ...	Mr. J. M. Trinick

*Plant Pathology—*

Entomologist ...	Dr. G. M. Das
Mycologist ...	Mr. K. C. Sarmah

*Engineering Department—*

Senior Research Engineer	Mr. I. McTear
Assistant Research Engineer	.. D. N. Barbor

*Organisation in the Advisory Services—*

**ASSAM**

Senior Advisory Officer                      Mr. P. M. Glover

Advisory Officer, North Bank              D. J. Gray

**ASSAM (CACHAR)—**

Advisory Officer                              Mr. E. D. Heath

**WEST BENGAL**

Senior Advisory Officer                      Mr. R. L. Macdipine

Advisory Officer, Darjeeling &  
Terai    W. J. Grice

Additional Advisory Officer                  H. Mitra

**TOCKLAI**

Advisory Officer (under  
training)                                        Mr. W. Hadfield

Additional Advisory Officer                  Dr. P. C. Sharma

*(a) Leave :—*

The Director was on leave from June to October, his place being taken by Dr. Wight. Mr. Glover, the Senior Advisory Officer in Assam, went on leave from May to October, being replaced by Mr. Heath, who worked between Cachar and Tocklai. Mr. Green, the Selection Officer in the Botanical Branch, was on leave from April to November.

*(b) Promotion :—*

*(i) Engineering Department :—* Mr. D. N. Barbori was confirmed early in the year as the Assistant Research Engineer in the Additional Officer grade. In December, it was agreed that Mr. Barbori should be promoted to the Officer grade with effect from 1st January, 1958.



- (ii) *Botanical Branch*.—Mr. P. K. Barua, in view of his added responsibilities following a reorganisation of work in this branch was upgraded to the Additional Officer grade in December, 1957.

(c) *New Appointments*:—

- (i) *Tocklai establishment*.—Mr. N. C. Barooah was appointed as the new Maintenance Engineer in the Additional Officer grade in June, 1957.
- (ii) *Agricultural Department*.—Dr. K. N. Sharma of Gauhati University was appointed as the Agronomist in the Additional Officer grade in July, 1957.
- (iii) *Statistical Branch*.—Further correspondence took place with Dr. A. R. Sen who is designated for the appointment of Statistician. He is expected to take up his duties in March, 1958 in the Officer grade.
- (iv) *Tca Chemistry and Technology*.—Mr. D. J. Wood tendered his resignation in August and is due to leave India in April, 1958.
- (v) *Advisory Branches*.—In accordance with recommendations made in the Engledow Commission Report a new Advisory Officer, Mr. W. Hadfield, was appointed in October, 1957. He is at present under training at Tocklai.

(d) *Accommodation*:—

- (i) *Tocklai*.—In March the Chota bungalow at Tocklai was burned down but fortunately Mr. and Mrs. Glover managed to save most of their possessions. The Insurance Company met the claim in full and a new bungalow is now nearing completion on the old site.
- (ii) *Advisory Branches*.—Mr. Grice and Mr. Gray, the two Advisory Officers who joined in 1956 took up touring duties during the year. Mr. Grice is attached to the West Bengal Advisory Branch and

is responsible for the Terai and Darjeeling. He will be stationed in Darjeeling when he leaves the Dooars to which District he has been temporarily posted. The Additional Officer at Nagrakata, Mr. H. Mitra, is living in the new bungalow at the Nya Sylee Estate. Mr. Gray is touring the North Bank and is in temporary quarters until a permanent bungalow can be built for the Branch. The meteorological sub-station set up by the Cachar Advisory Branch at the Silcoorie Tea Estate came into operation on 1st January, 1957. It is hoped to establish similar sub-stations at Nagrakata and Darjeeling in time.

**Commercial Testing Unit.**— During the year it was agreed that a Commercial Testing Unit should be set up at Tocklai to test plant protection products. The scheme was approved by the London and Calcutta Committees in March, and rules for the operation of the testing unit were drawn up in consultation with legal advisers. In December an Additional Officer was appointed to take charge of the unit, Dr. T. D. Mukerjee, Ph.D. (Lond.), F.R.E.S., of the Central Drug and Research Institute, Lucknow. He took up his appointment in February 1958.

**The McTear Rotovane.**— During the year successful trials on a commercial estate were completed on the Continuous Roller No. 1 (Screw Type) and the Association decided, after ascertaining the interest of Agency House members, to arrange manufacture of a small number of these machines for sale to members. The Port Engineering Works have undertaken to manufacture the machines under an agreement with the Association and it is hoped that the Agency Houses who have placed orders will have the machines in operation in the 1958 season. It has been agreed that the machine should be named the "McTear Rotovane" in recognition of the part played in its development by the Senior Research Engineer. The Association gratefully acknowledges the assistance and co-operation rendered in the commercial trial of the machine by the Dhoolie Tea Co., Ltd.

**Annual Conference.**— The Tocklai Annual Conference took place at Tocklai from 12th to the 14th November. The subject of the Conference was "Tea in Relation to Regional Environment in N. E. India", on which interesting papers were read by members of the staff. Delegates were also shown experimental work at Borbhetta and machines developed by the Engineering Department.

**Annual Lecture Course.**— Three lecture courses were held between February and March at Tocklai. Each course was attended by 25 nominees of members and other producer Associations. The courses were conducted as usual by the Advisory Officers and consisted of lectures and practical demonstrations.

**Visits.**— (a) *Dr. E.A.H. Roberts.*—Dr. Roberts of the London Laboratory paid a three-week visit to India in November in connection with the investigation into the Chemistry of Made Tea. Discussions took place at Tocklai with the Director and Mr. Wood and before he left Dr. Roberts addressed members of the Scientific Department Sub-Committee in Calcutta.

(b) *Mr. W. G. L. Austin.*—Messrs. Plant Protection Ltd., England at the request of the Director, kindly arranged for Mr. Austin to be made available to Tocklai for six months to provide technical assistance in the laying out of field experiments designed to ascertain means of combating blights and diseases which have menaced the industry for some time.

**Scientific Department publications.**— In addition to the usual Annual and Quarterly Reports the following publications were issued by the Scientific Department during the year :—

*Articles :*

1. "A New Record of a rare Fungus from Tea Rhizosphere," by V. Agnihothrudu and G. C. S. Barua.
2. "What is Tea?", by W. Wight and P. K. Barua.
3. "Practical aspects of Spacing and Arrangements of Tea Plants in Commercial Tea Estates," by P. M. Glover.

- 4 "Assam Tea Looks Ahead", by Dr. Wight and Mr. Gokhale.

*Journals :*

- 1 "Two and A Bud" (Toeklai Newsletter), Vol. IV, Nos. 1, 2, 3 and 4.  
2 "Cachar Quarterly", Vol. II Nos. 1, 2, 3 and 4.

*Tea Encyclopaedia Serials :*

- 16/1 Cleaning of fermenting floors etc.  
21/1 Seasonal distribution of yield in Assam tea estates.  
33/3 Recipes for pesticides which can be prepared home made on the garden.  
36/2 Hail damage on tea estates.  
40/2 *Crotalaria Anagyroides*.  
43/2 Infilling and treatment of infills.  
53/2 Medium Pruning.  
61/2 The Prevention and Cure of Red Rust.  
62/1 (Revised Appendix) A note on spraying technique against Blister Blight.  
65/2 Branch Die-Back and Nectria.  
68/1 Branch Canker (*Poria Hyporbrunnes* Patch) following Sun-Scorch and Branch Damage.  
71/1 (Addendum) Red Spider (Part II).  
100/1 Fertilisers and Fertiliser Mixtures.  
114 Prevention and Control of Borers attacking Tea Chest Panels.  
115 N.P.K. Manuring of Tea Seed Nurseries.  
116 Uprooting of Tea.  
117 Vegetative Propagation (by P. M. Glover).  
118 Vegetative Propagation (by S. K. Dutta, Part I).

N. S. COLDWELL.

*Chairman,*

*Scientific Department Sub-Committee.*

Royal Exchange,

CALCUTTA

25th February, 1958.



**INDIAN TEA ASSOCIATION**  

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**STATEMENTS OF ACCOUNTS**  
*For the year 1957.*